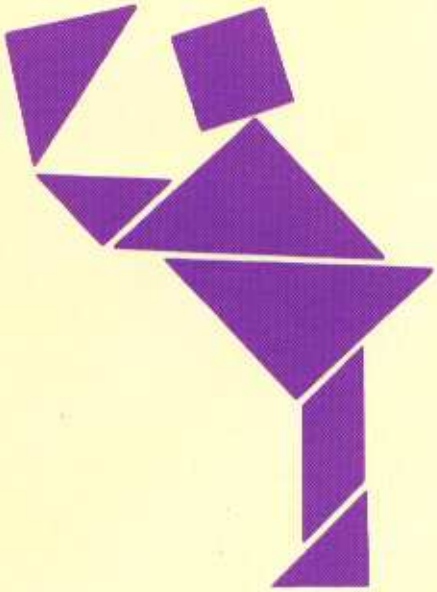
TANGRAMS ABC KIT



122
PUZZLES
WITH
TWO COMPLETE SETS
OF TANGRAM PIECES

SUSAN JOHNSTON

INTRODUCTION

Tangrams are puzzles made with seven geometrical pieces—five triangles (two small, one medium-size and two large), a rhomboid and a square. They are all cut from one large square. The trick is to arrange the pieces to form the silhouettes—people, animals and objects—printed on these pages. You can't overlap the pieces, or trim them so they fit, and you must use all seven pieces. Solutions are given starting on page 27, but use them only if you need to. Otherwise you will miss the thrill of solving the tricky puzzles.

Tangrams came to us from China, but we don't know how old they are. There are several explanations for the name of the puzzle. Some people think that it comes from the word *t'ang*, meaning Chinese. Others say that it comes from *tanka*, the river dwellers with whom Western sailors had dealings in the days when the Chinese government strictly limited all contact with foreigners. There are several other interpretations, none of them proven.

In the nineteenth century the tangram burst upon the West and became a craze. John Quincy Adams, Edgar Allan Poe and Lewis Carroll all racked their brains over the "puzzle of seven clever pieces."

For this book of tangram ABC's I have used some of the designs by those two great "tangrammatists," Henry E. Dudeney and Sam Loyd. In 1903 Loyd published *The Eighth Book of Tan* (a Dover reprint, 22011-7), a collection of tangrams with running commentary supposedly taken from a very ancient Chinese text. Although it is nothing of the kind and the whole book is written with tongue in cheek, several scholars fell into Loyd's trap and thought it was based on real works.

Two complete tangram sets, ready to punch out and use, are included here. After you have removed the pieces, smooth the edges with a nail file or scissors. You and a friend can have contests with them to see who can solve the puzzles faster. You can also use them to make your own tangram puzzles, perhaps combining both sets to make elaborate double tangrams. But be careful. There is no known cure for tangram fever.

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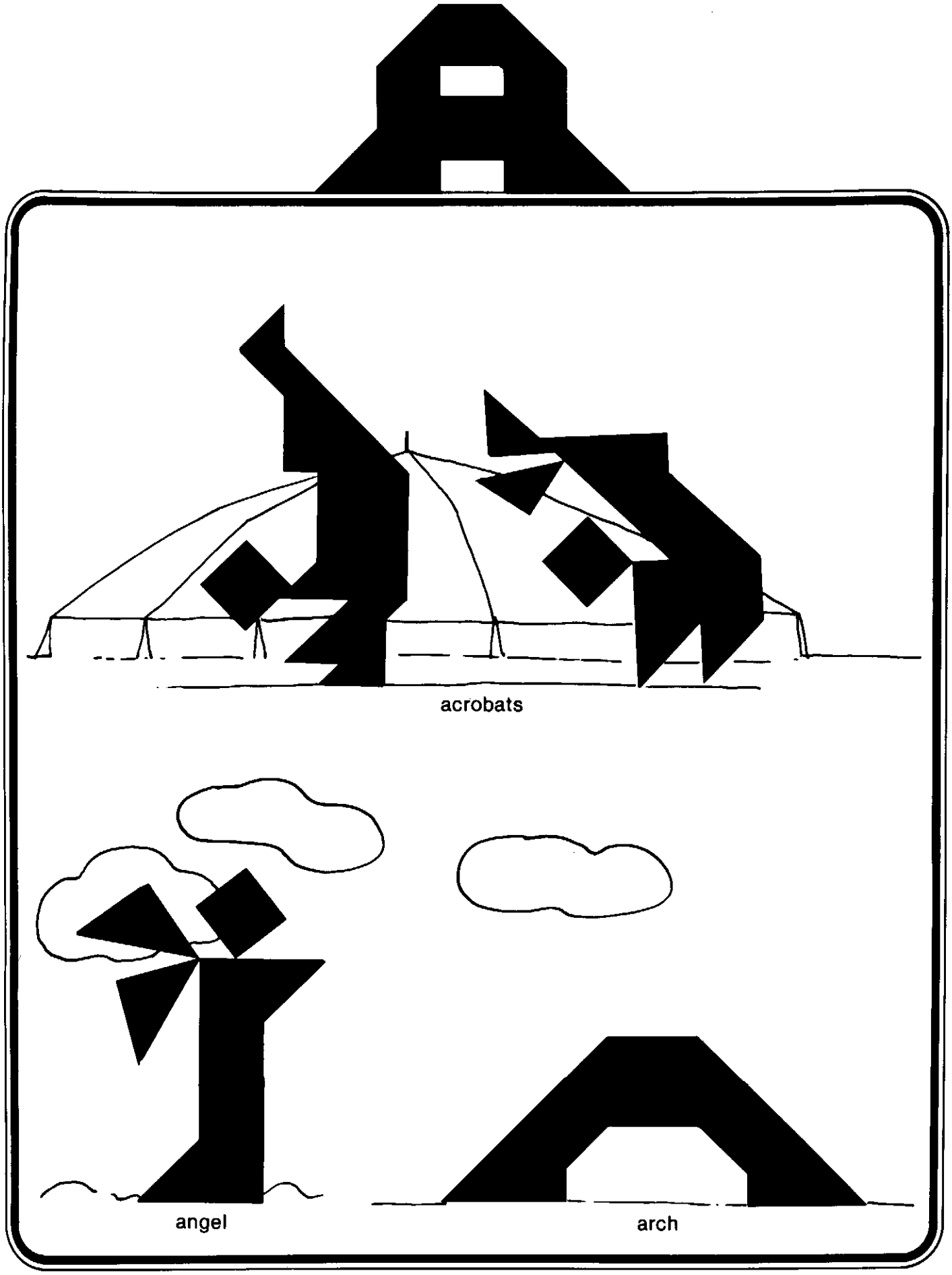
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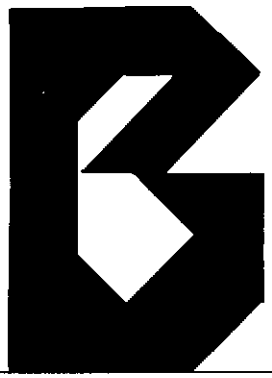

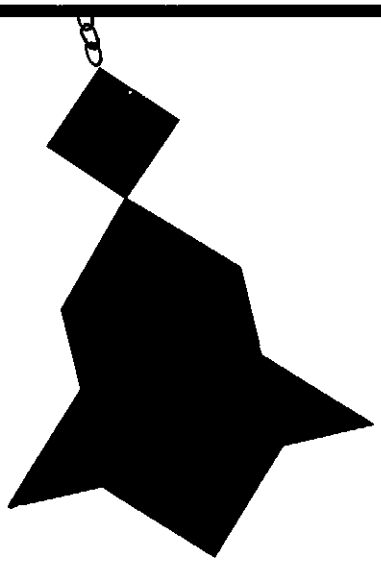

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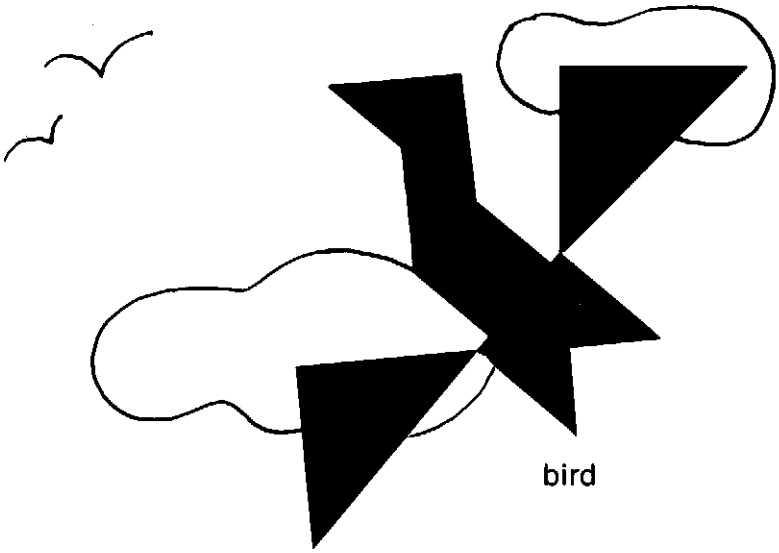

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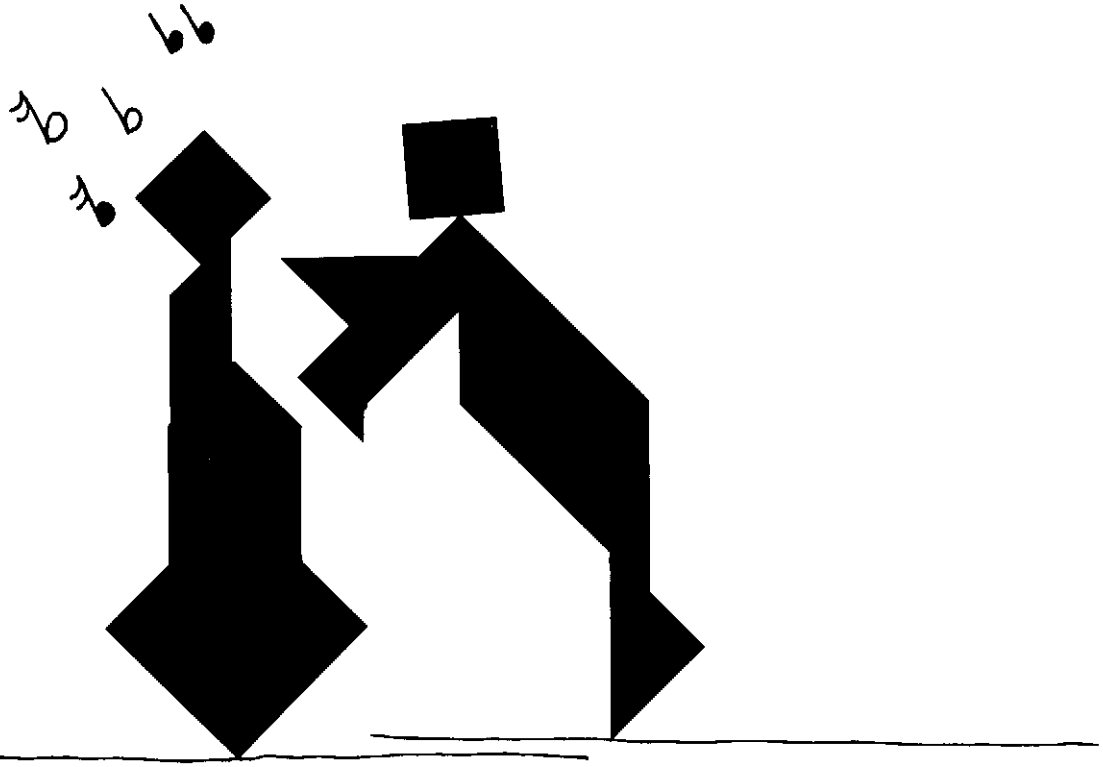

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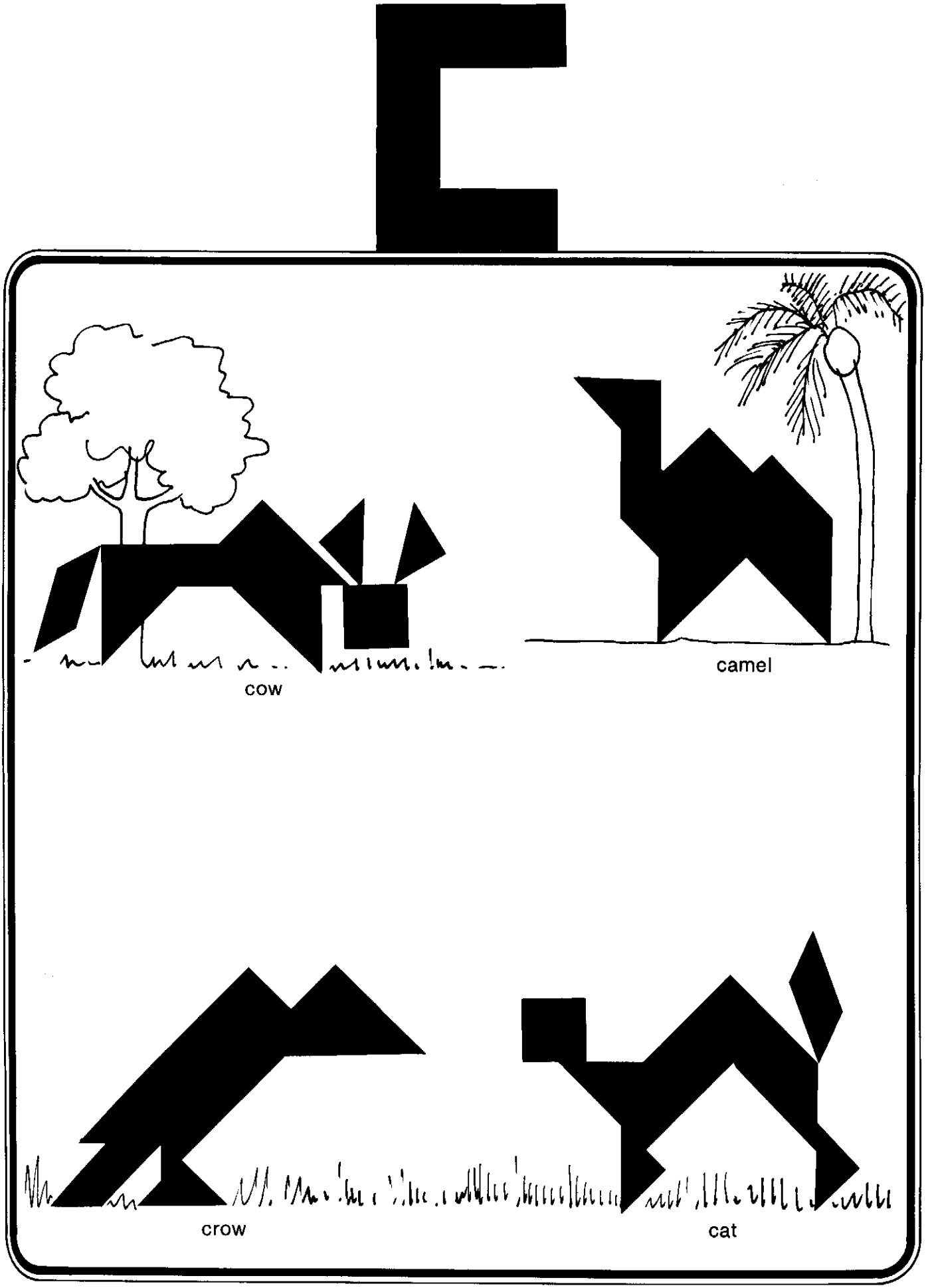
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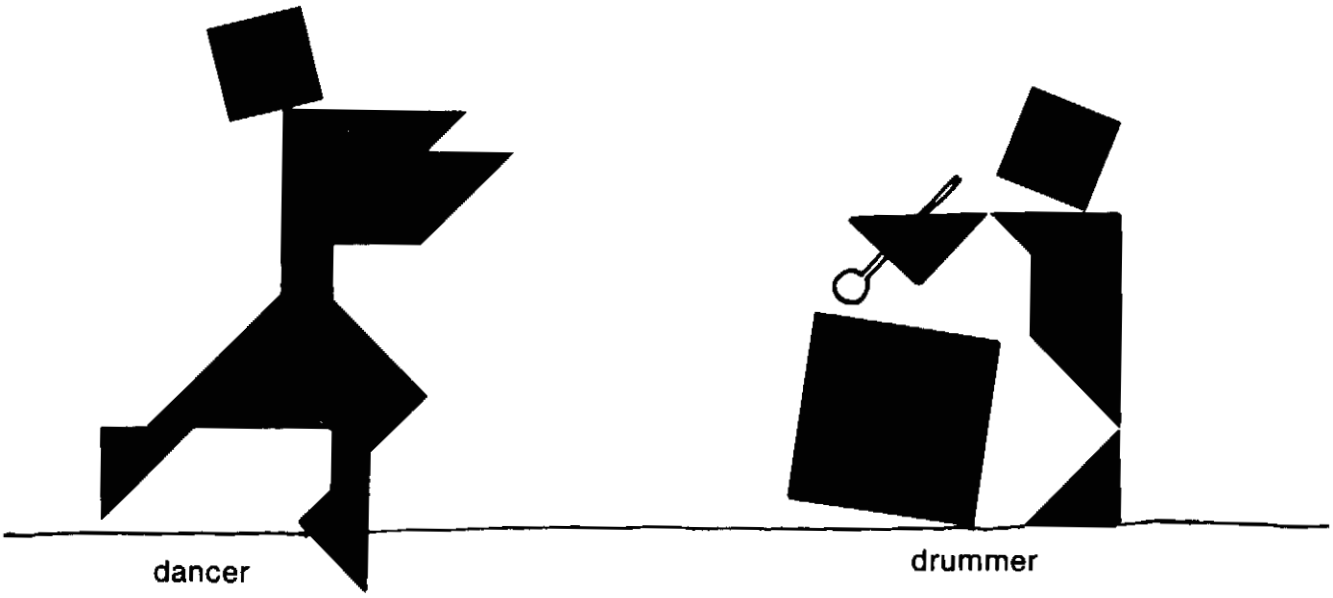

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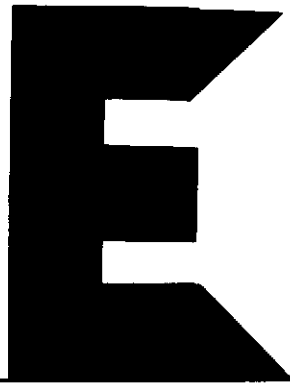
drummer

dolphin

dog



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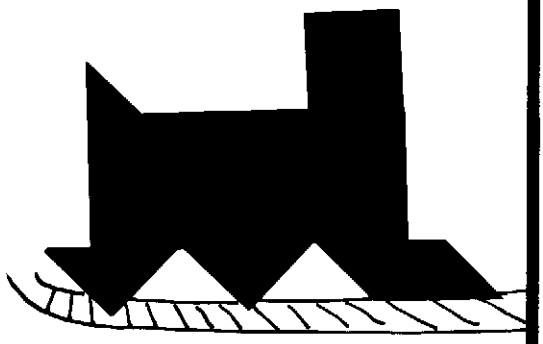

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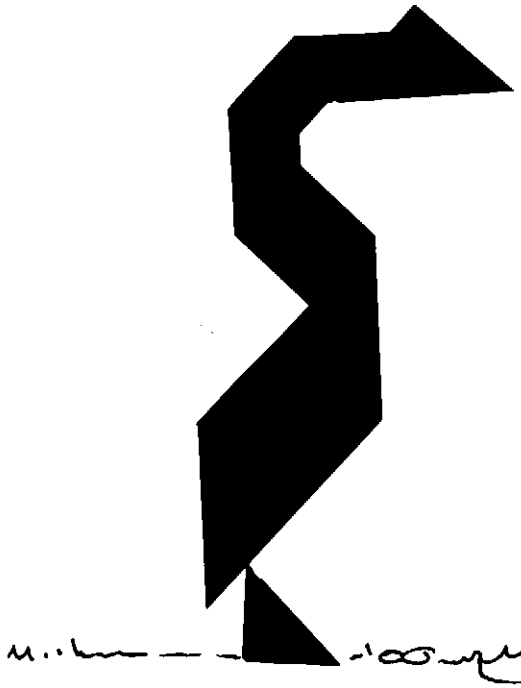

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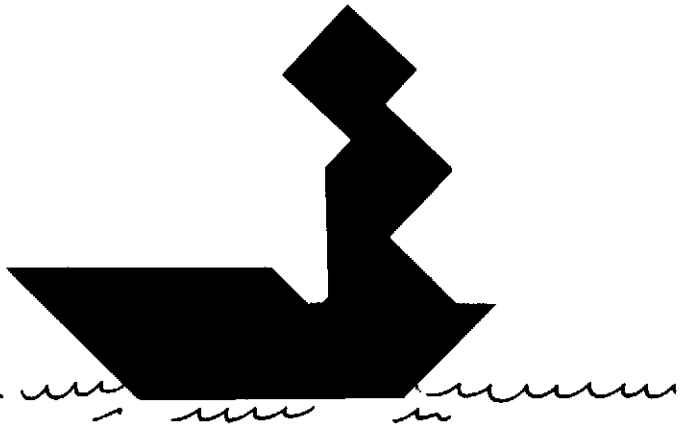

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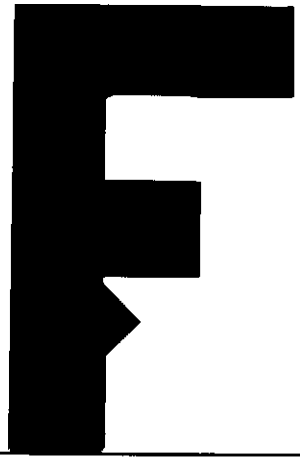

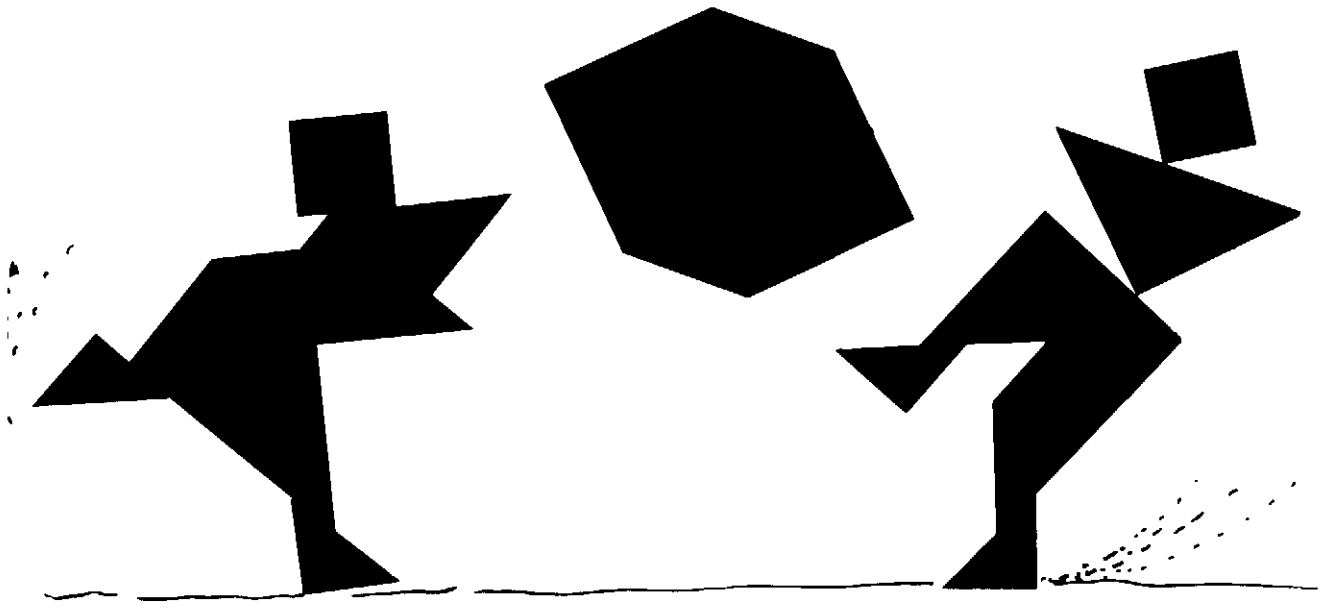

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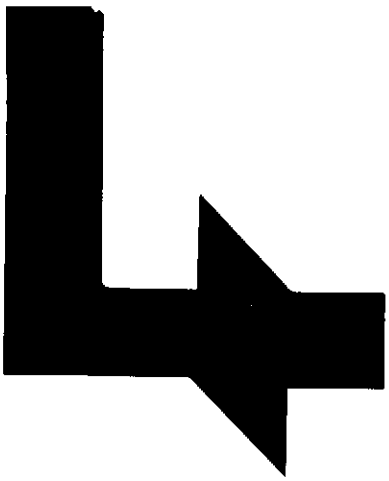

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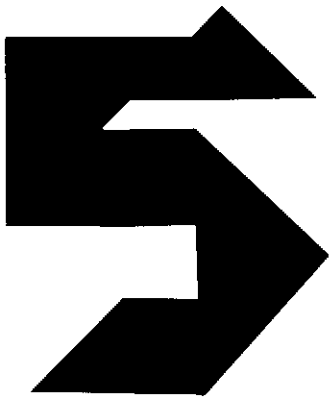

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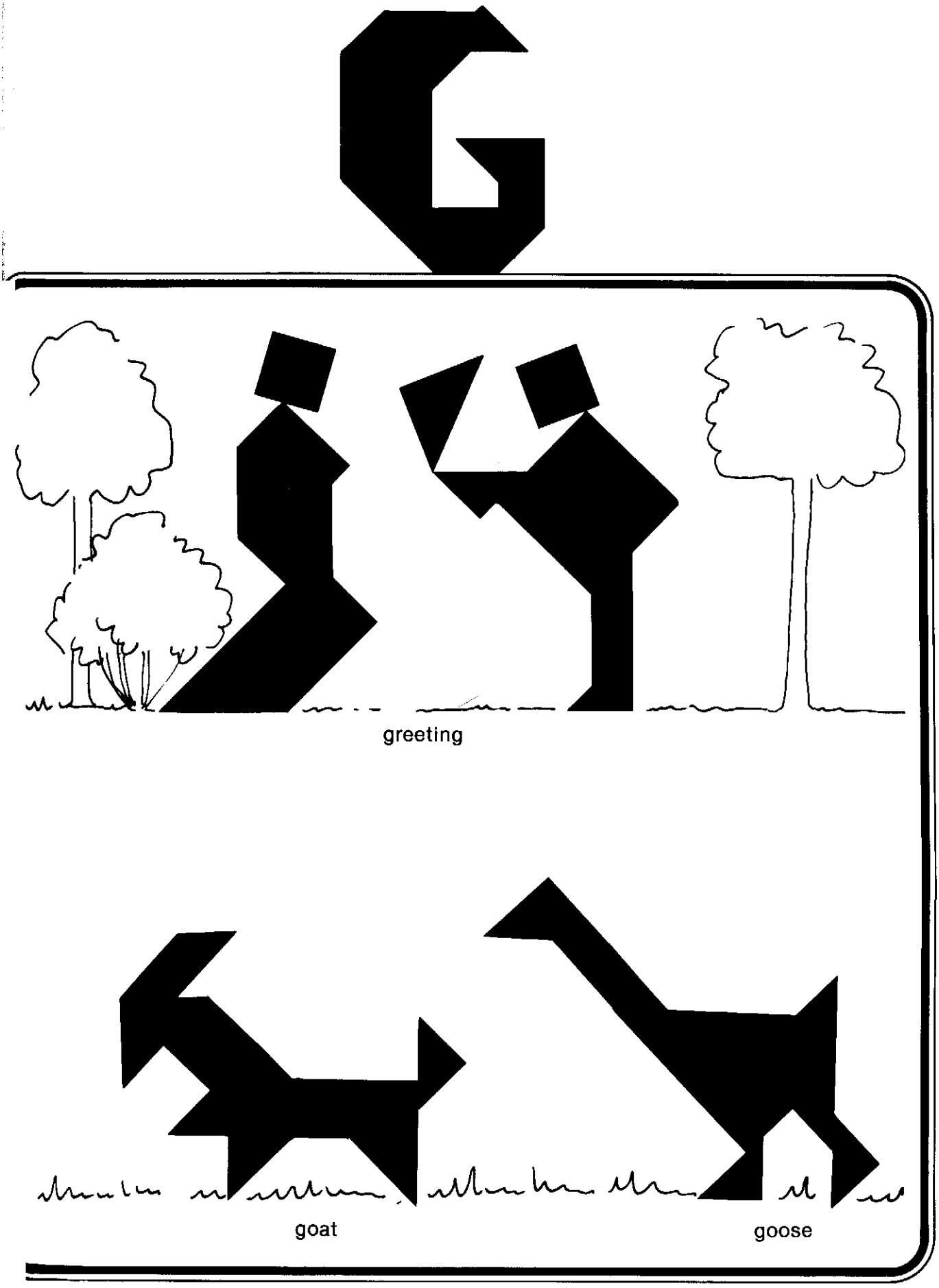
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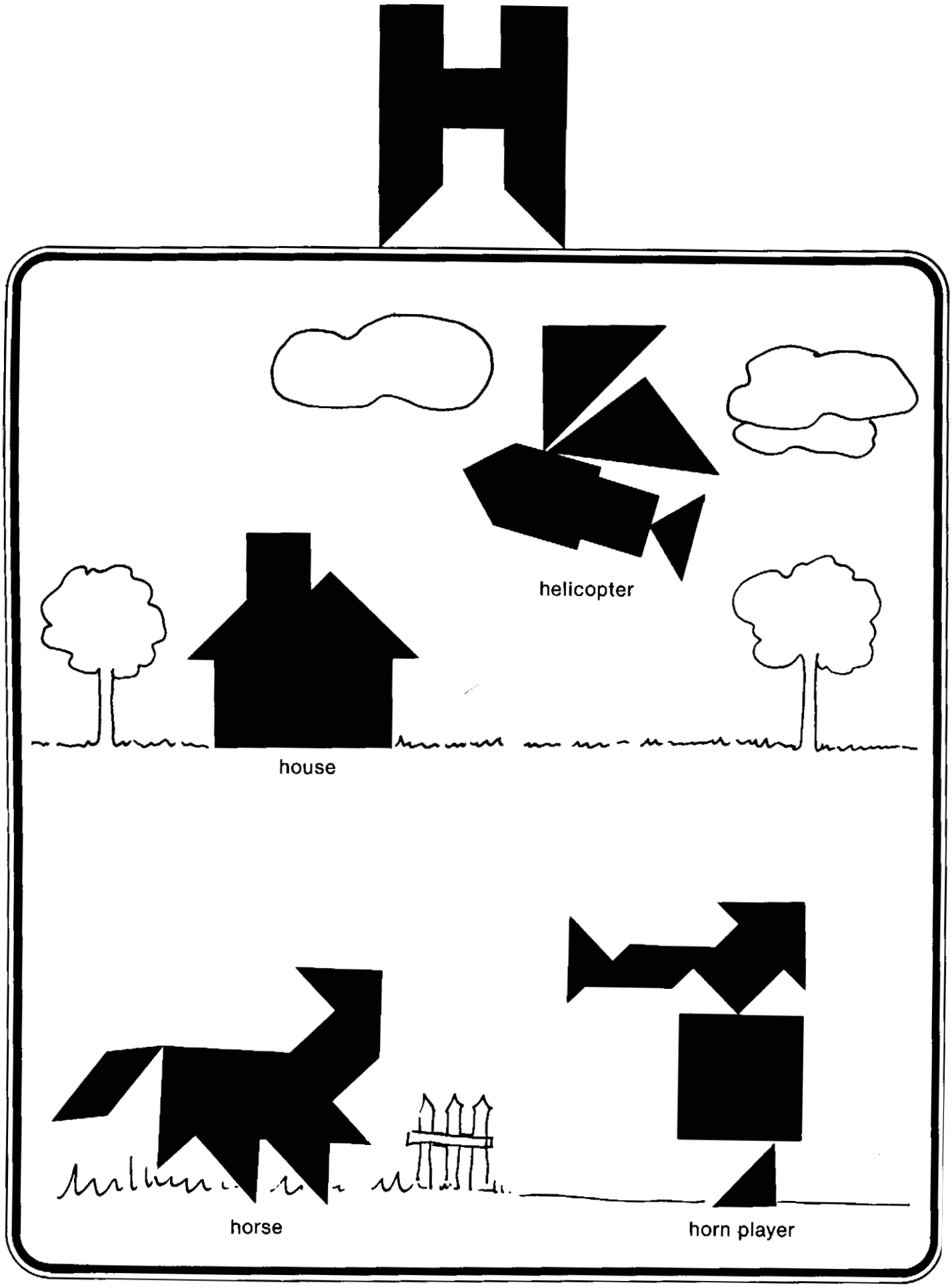
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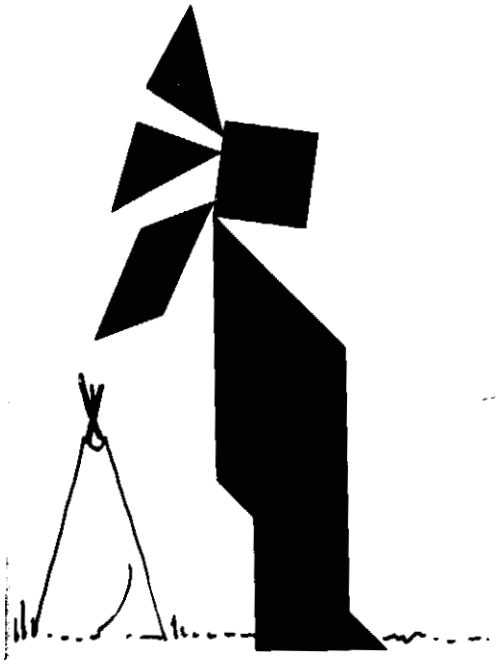

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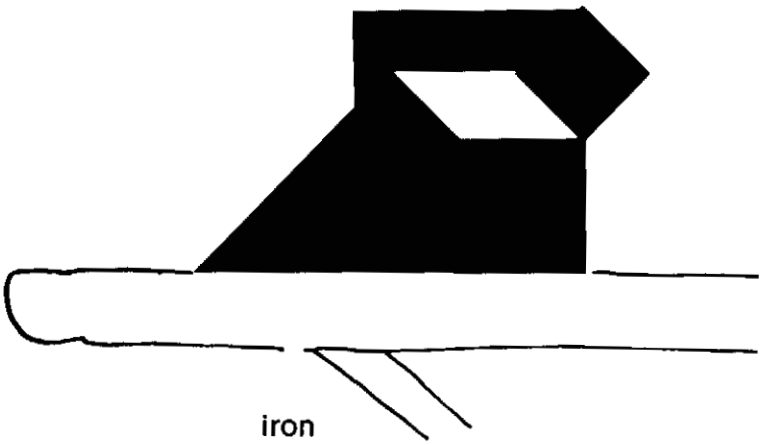

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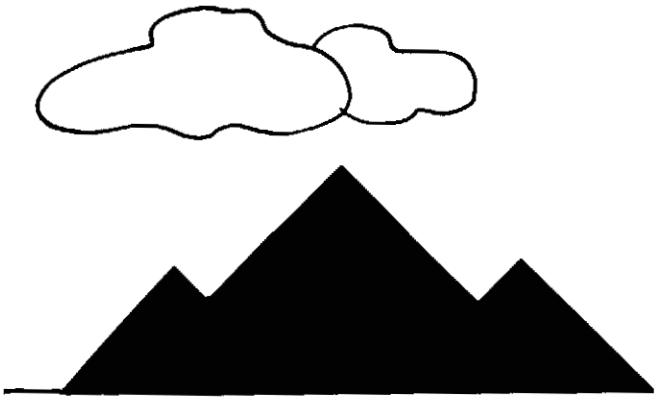

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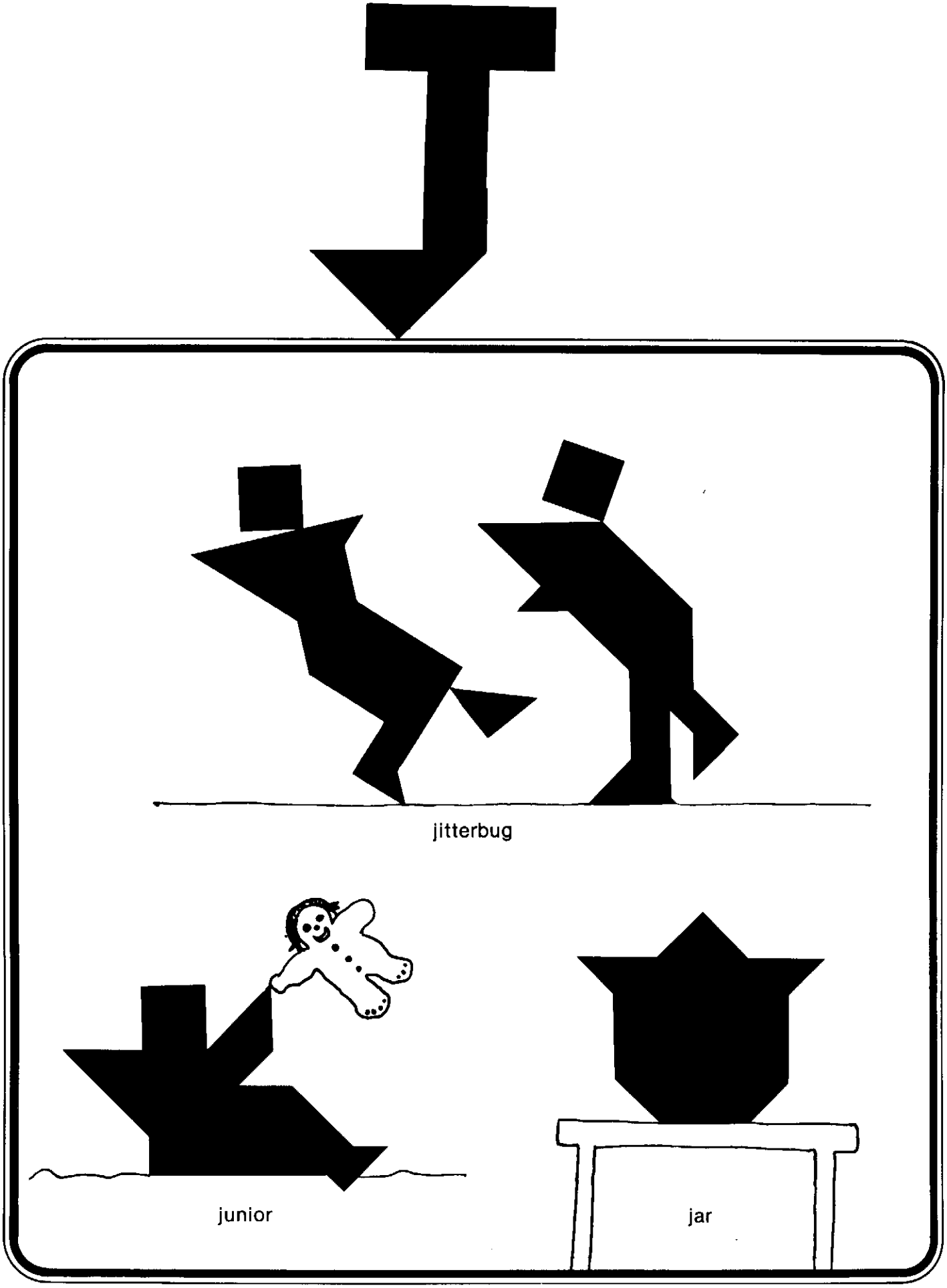
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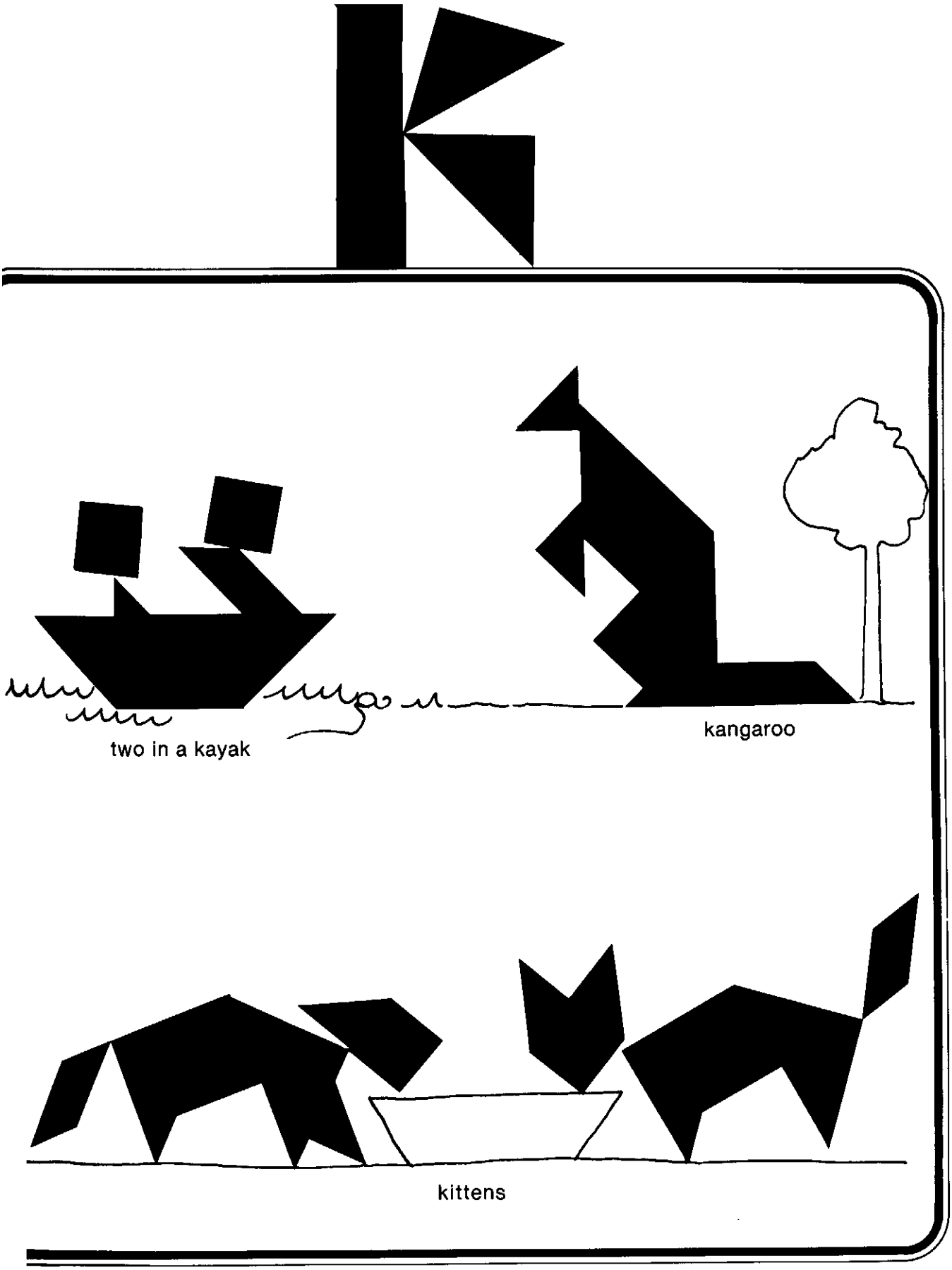
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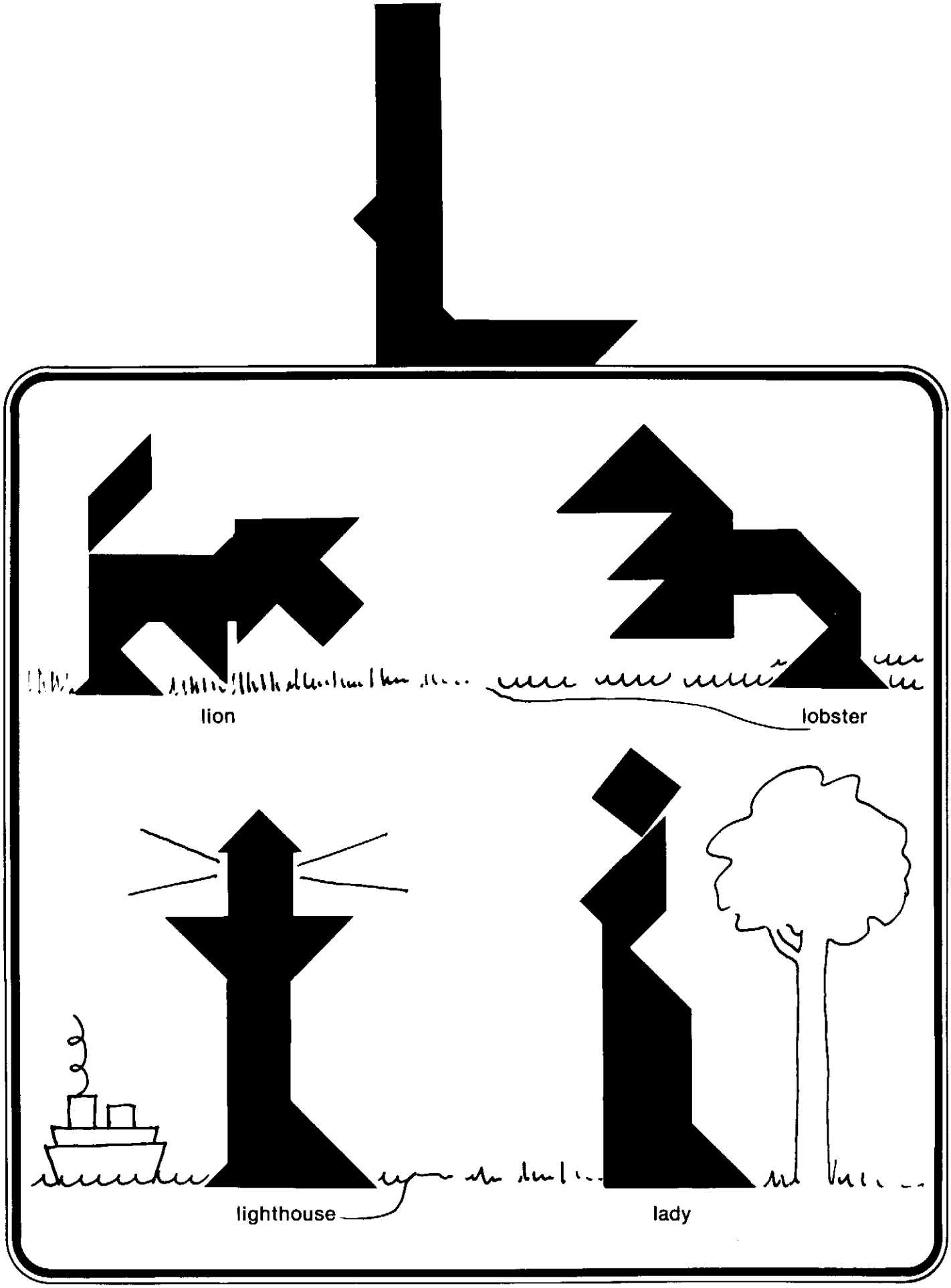
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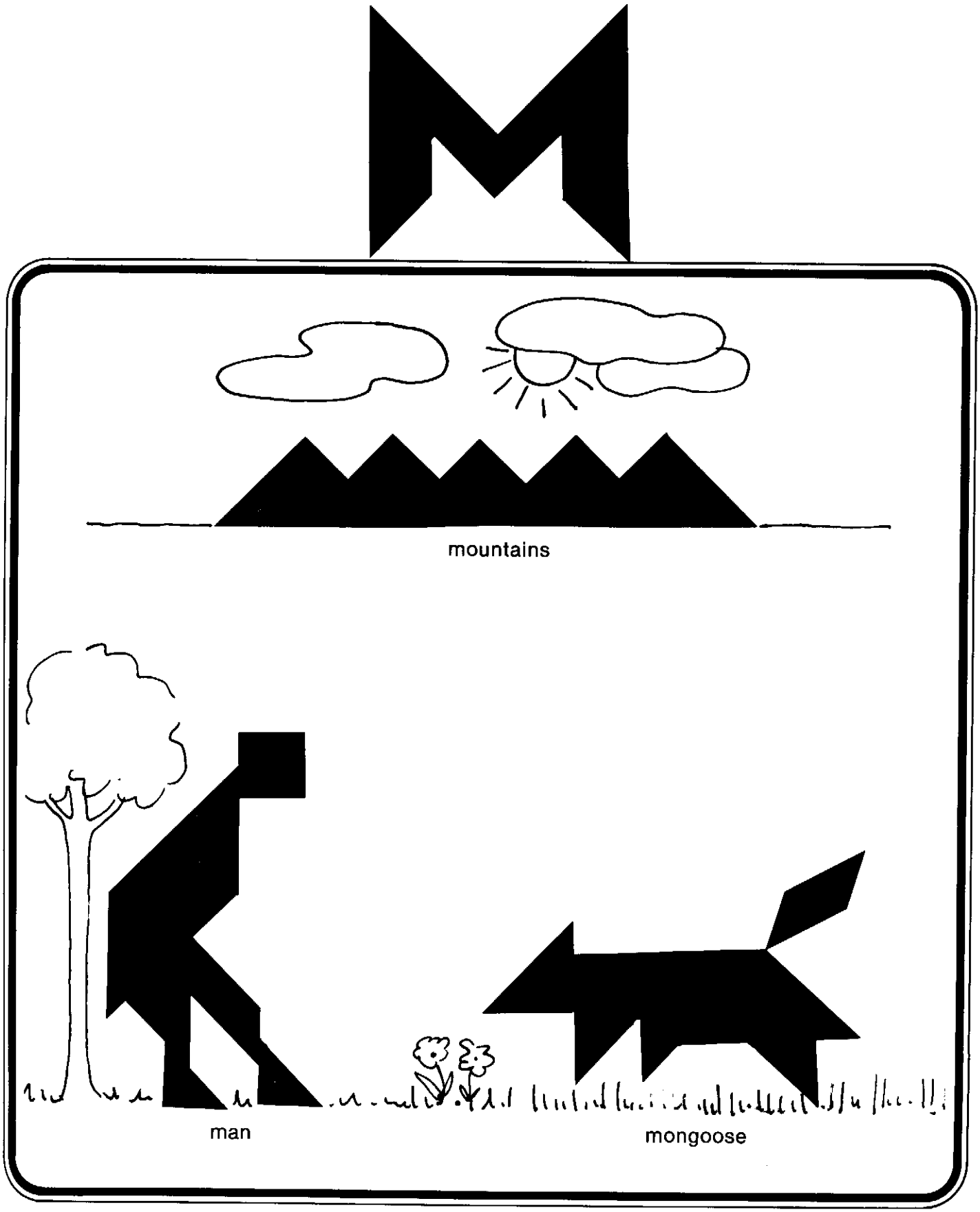
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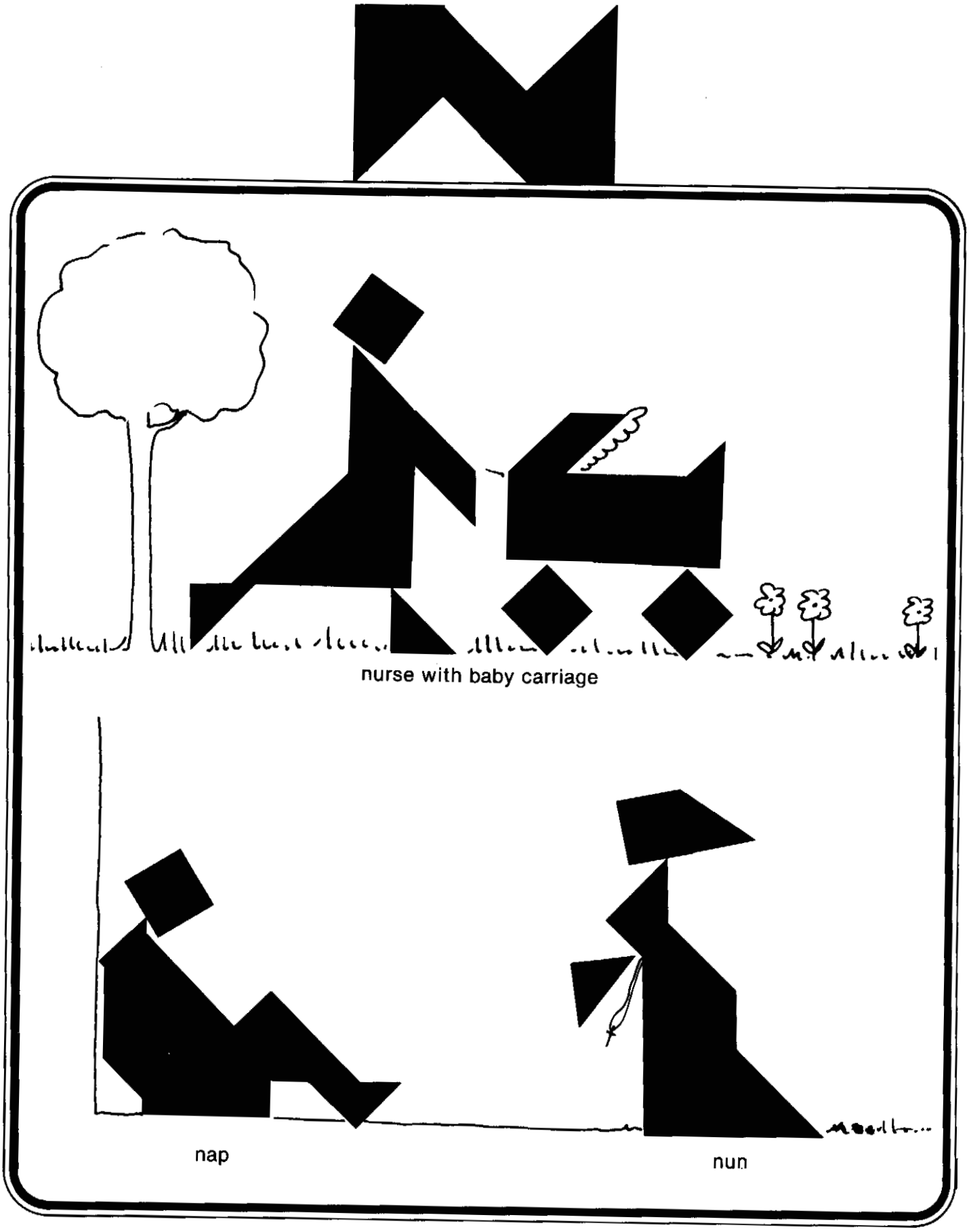
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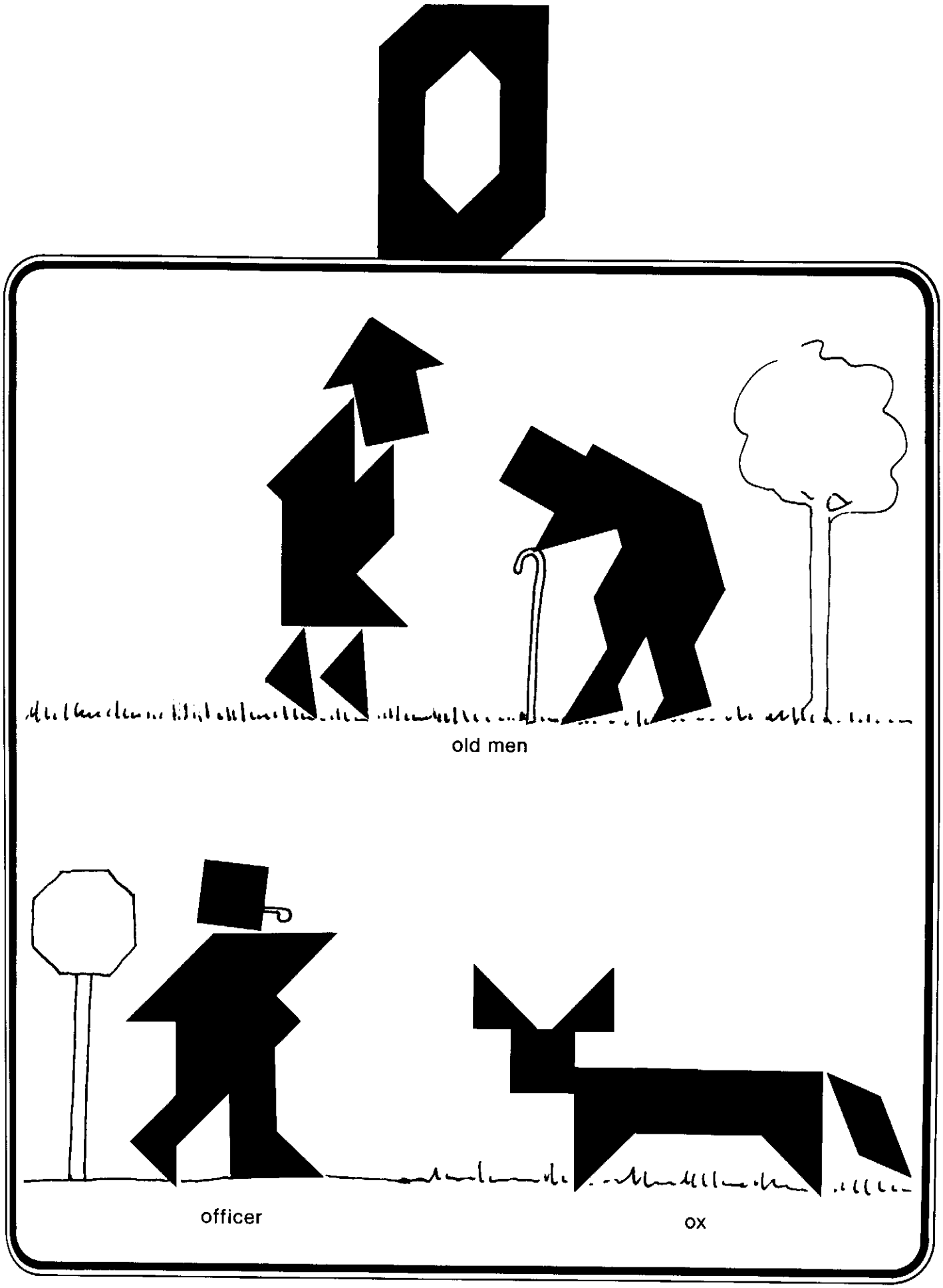
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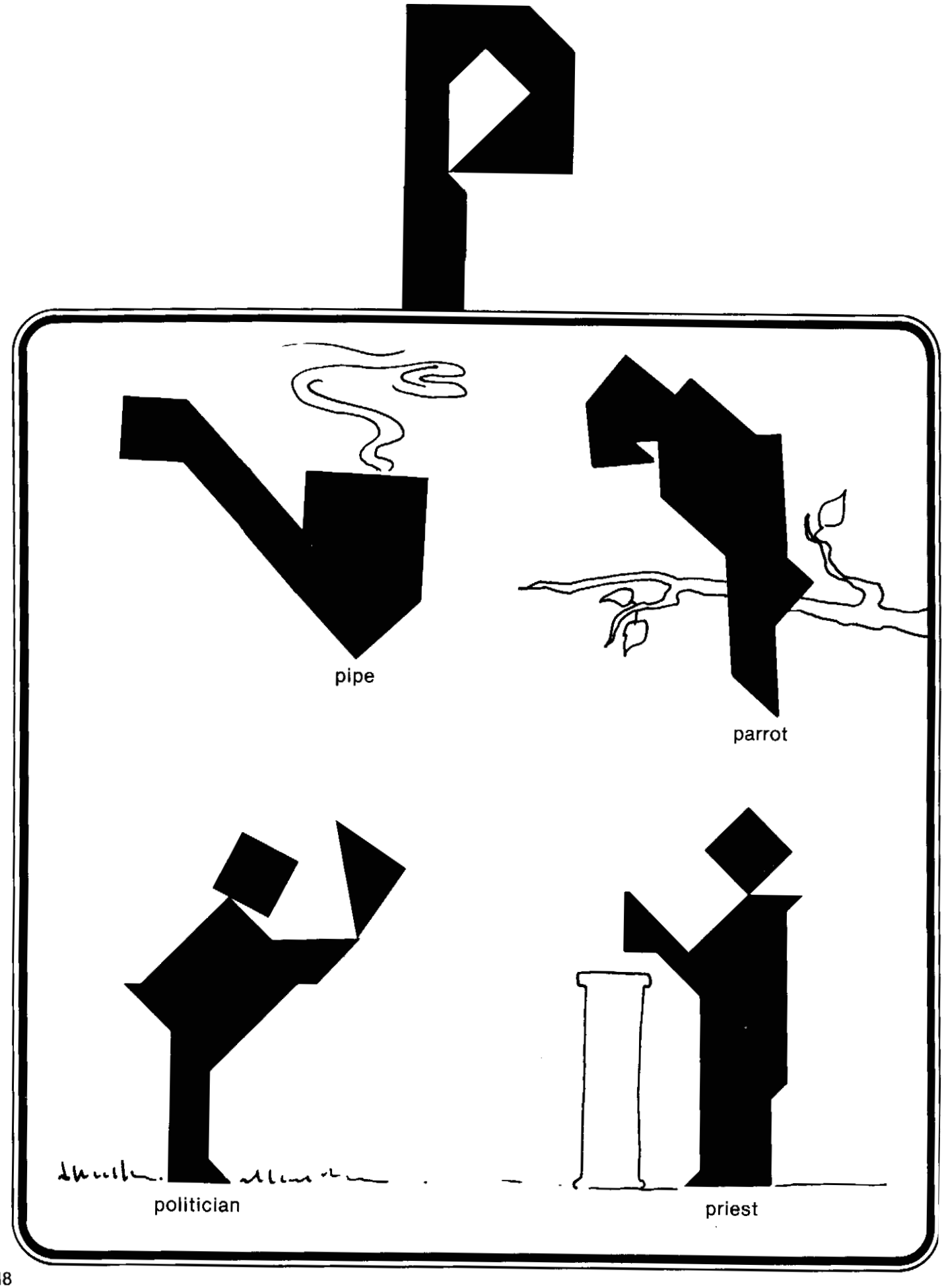
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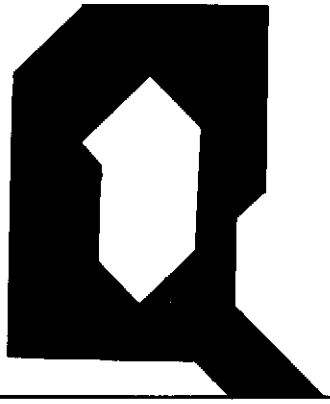

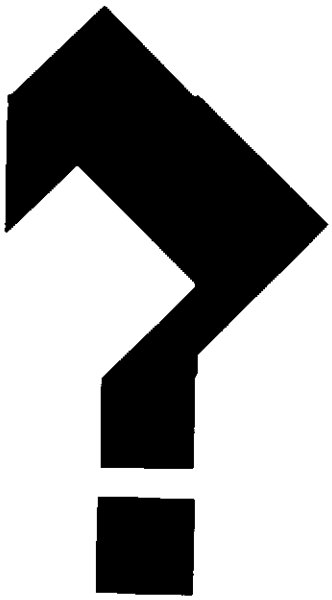

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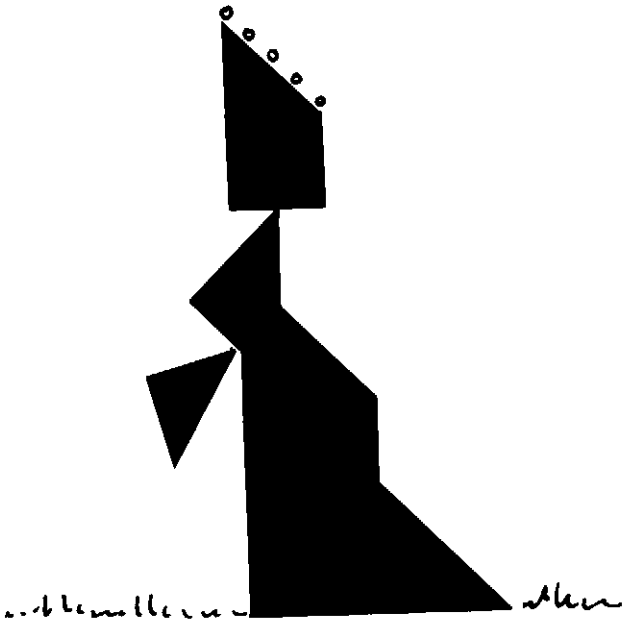

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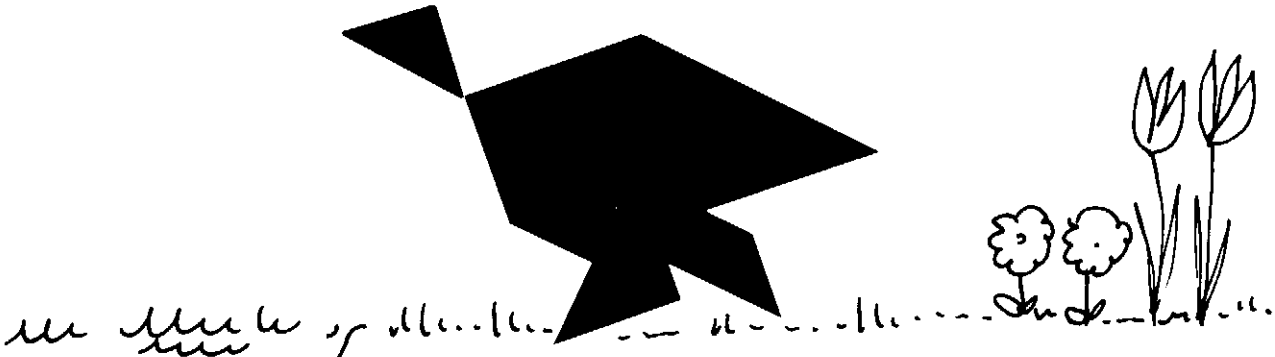

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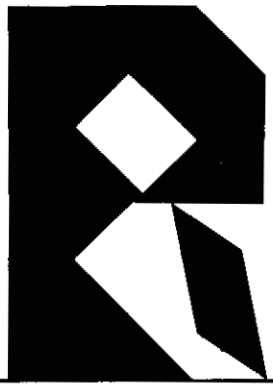

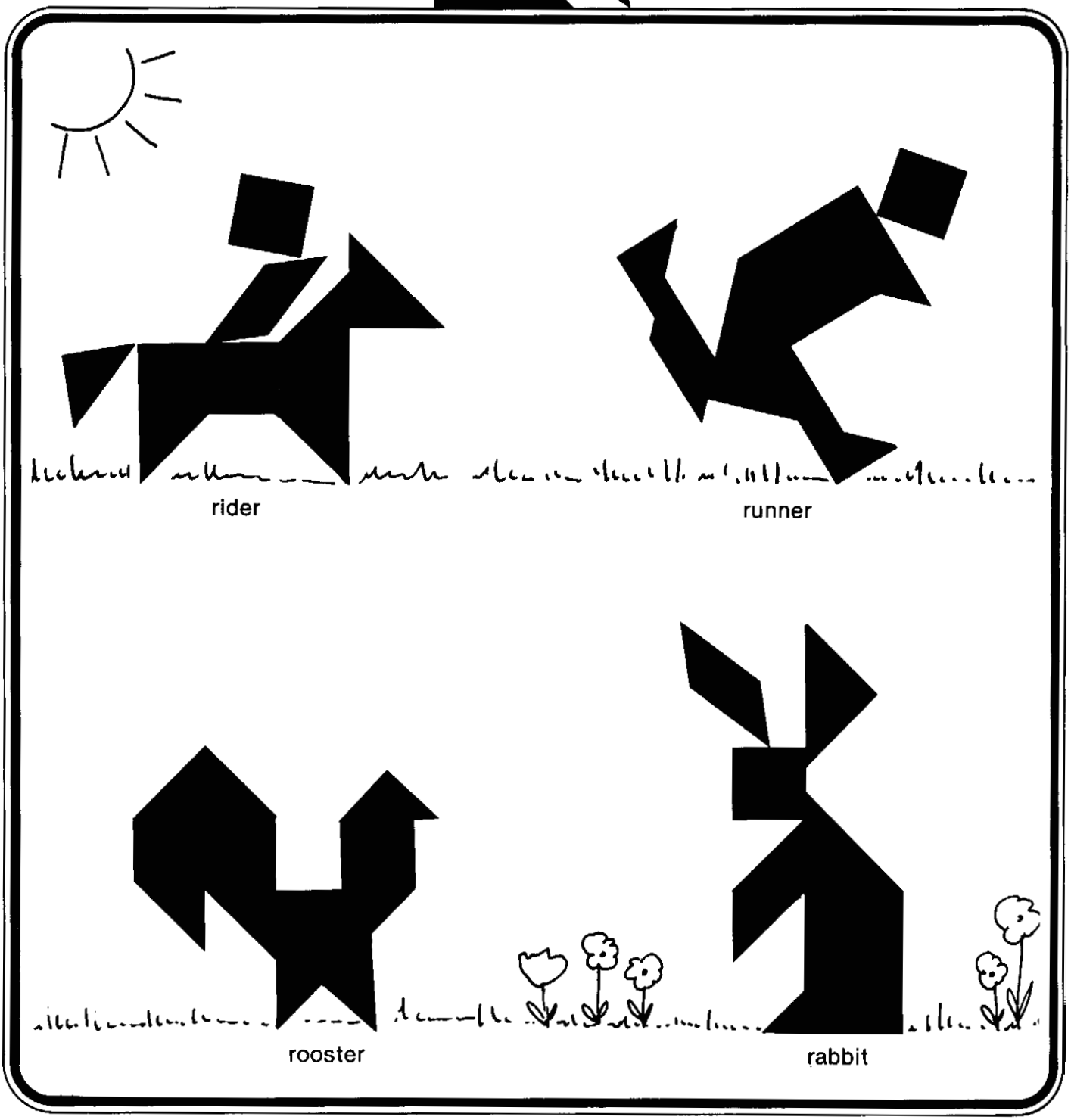
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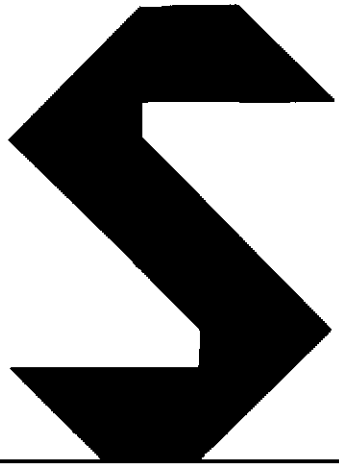

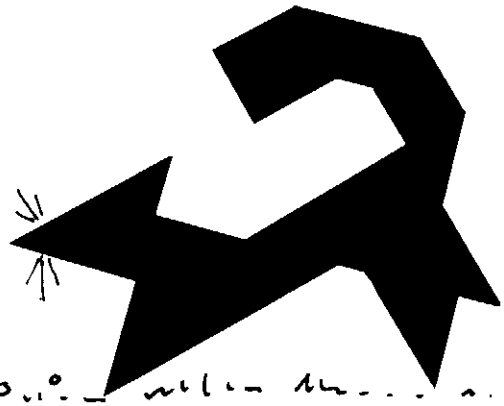

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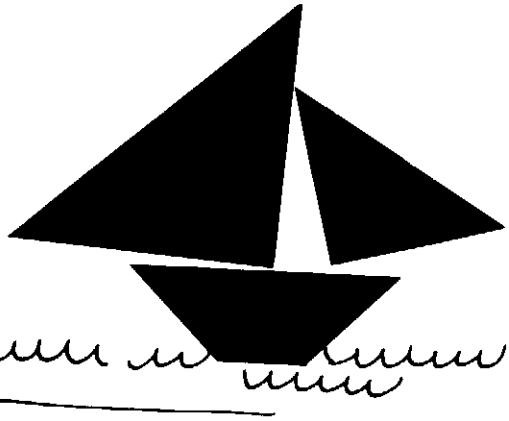

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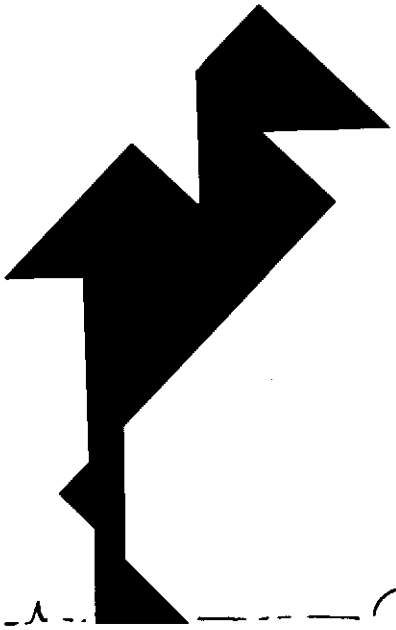

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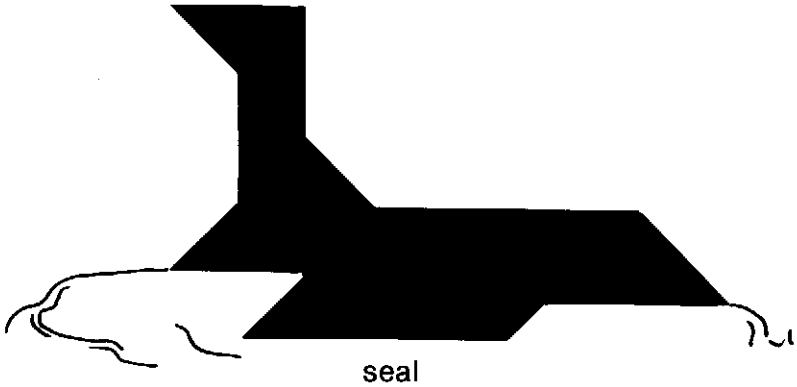

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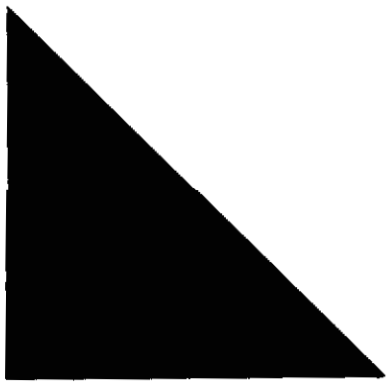

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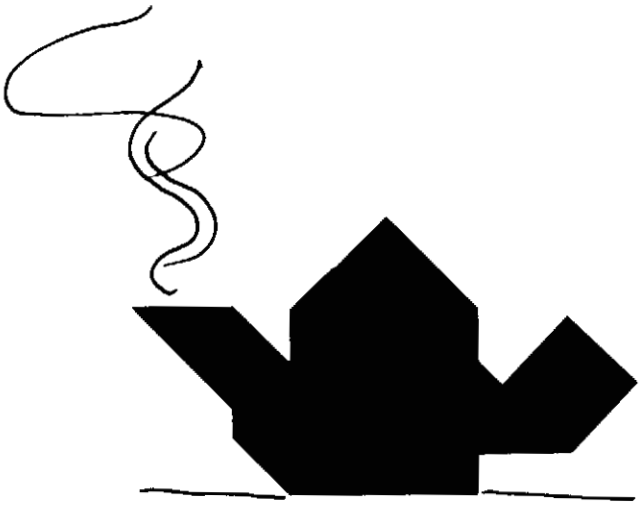

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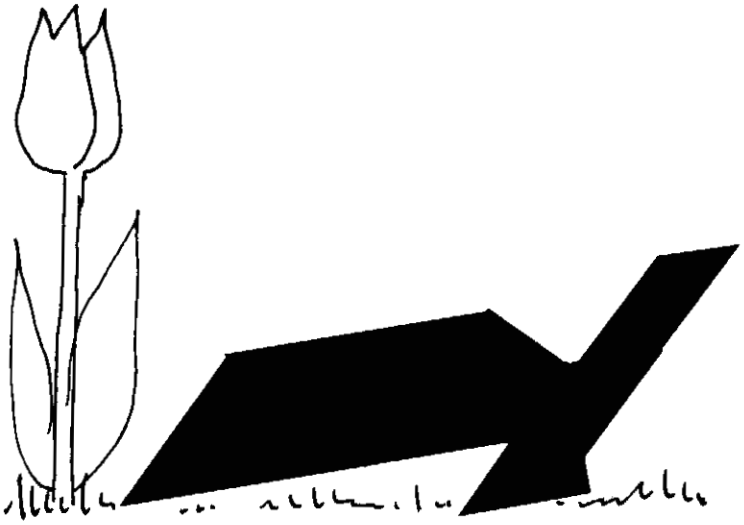

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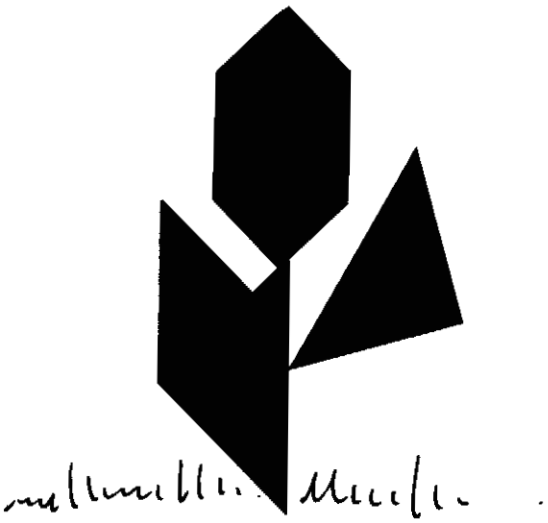

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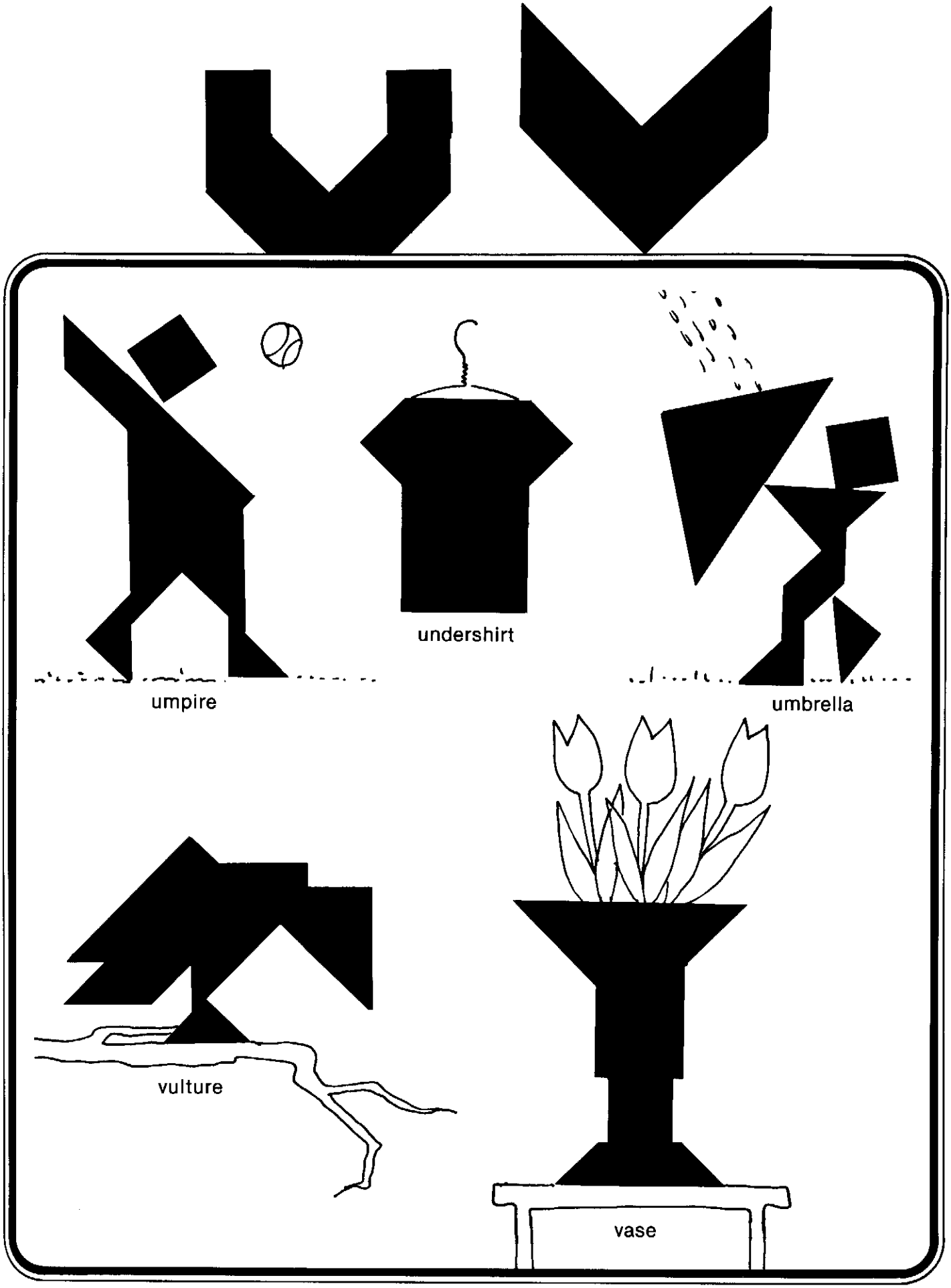
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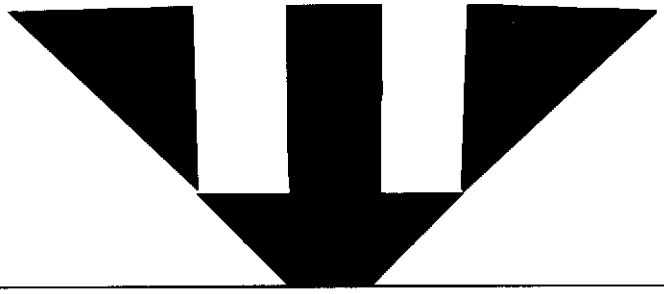

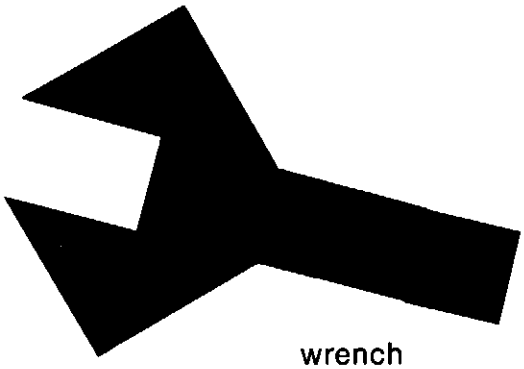

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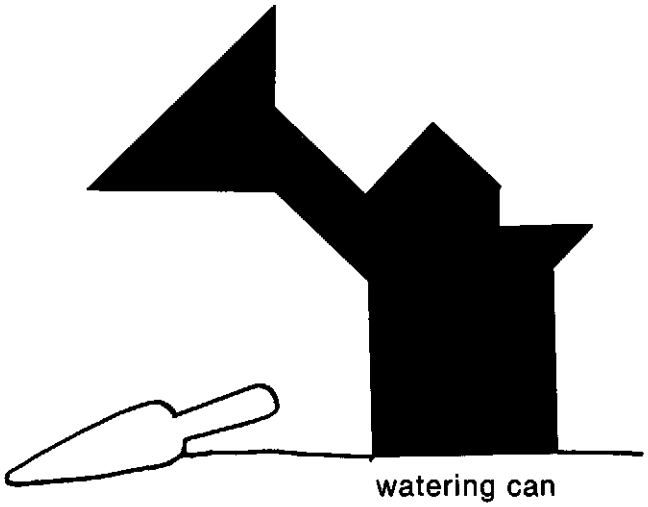

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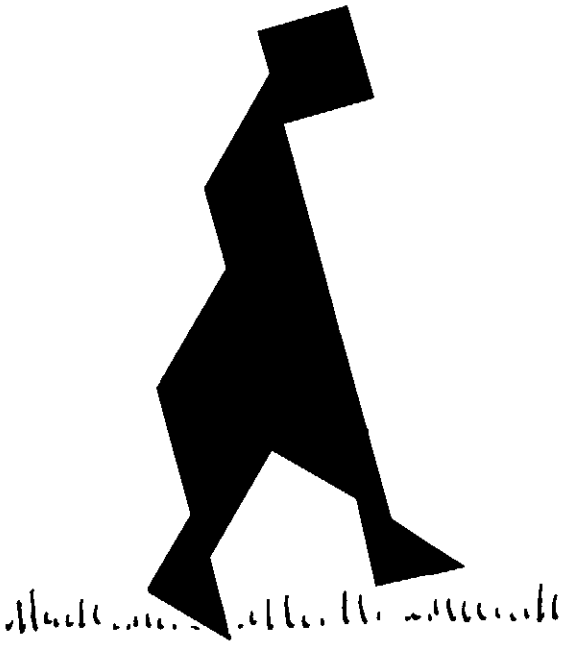
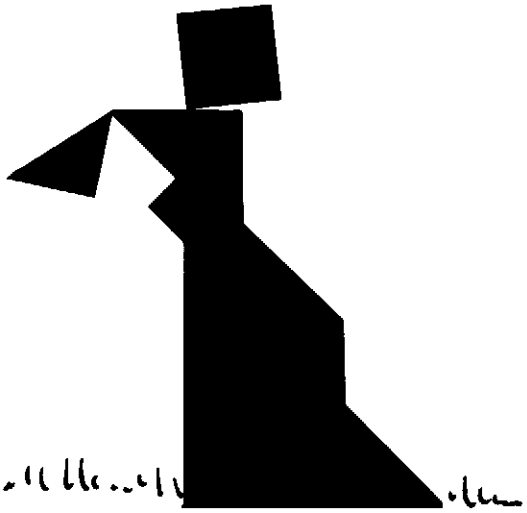


walking



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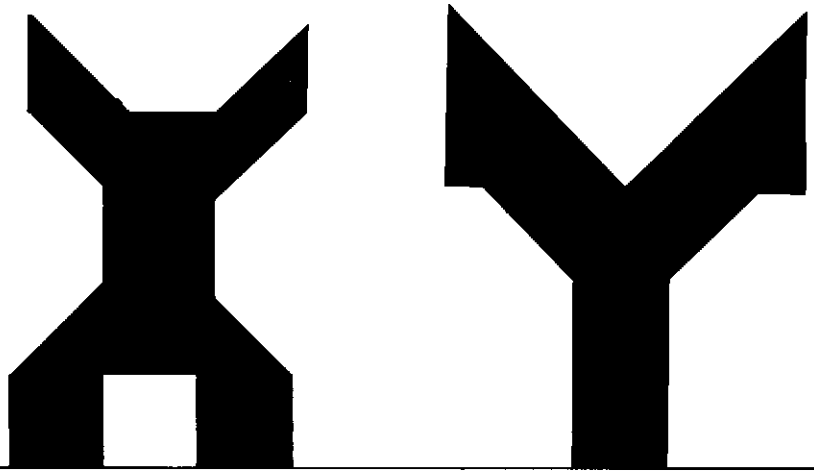

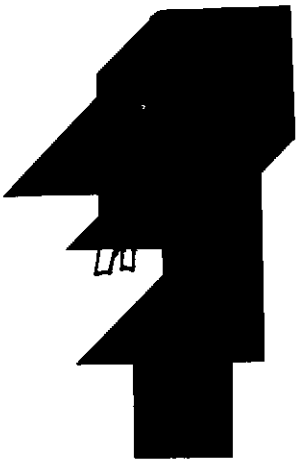

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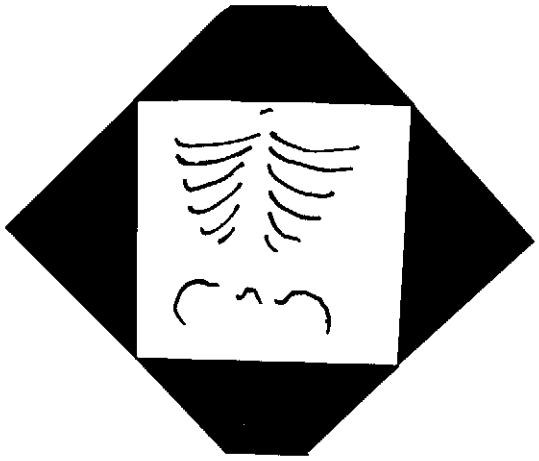
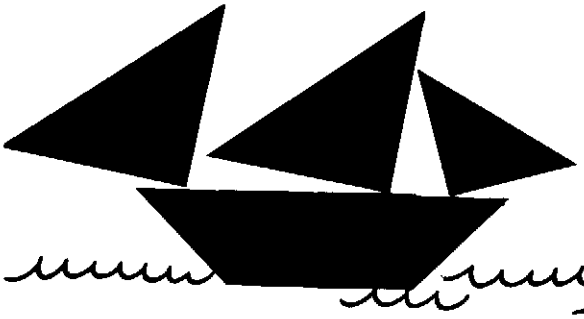


x-ray machine



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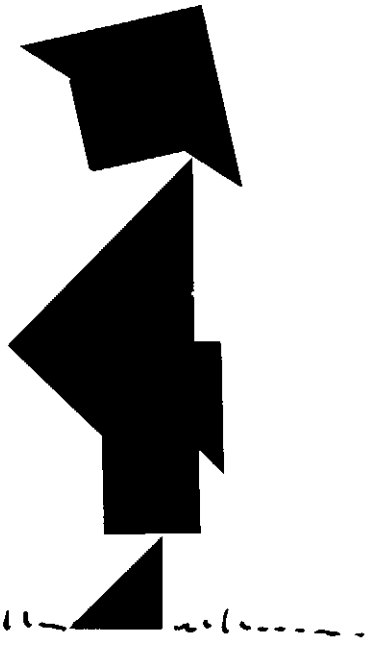

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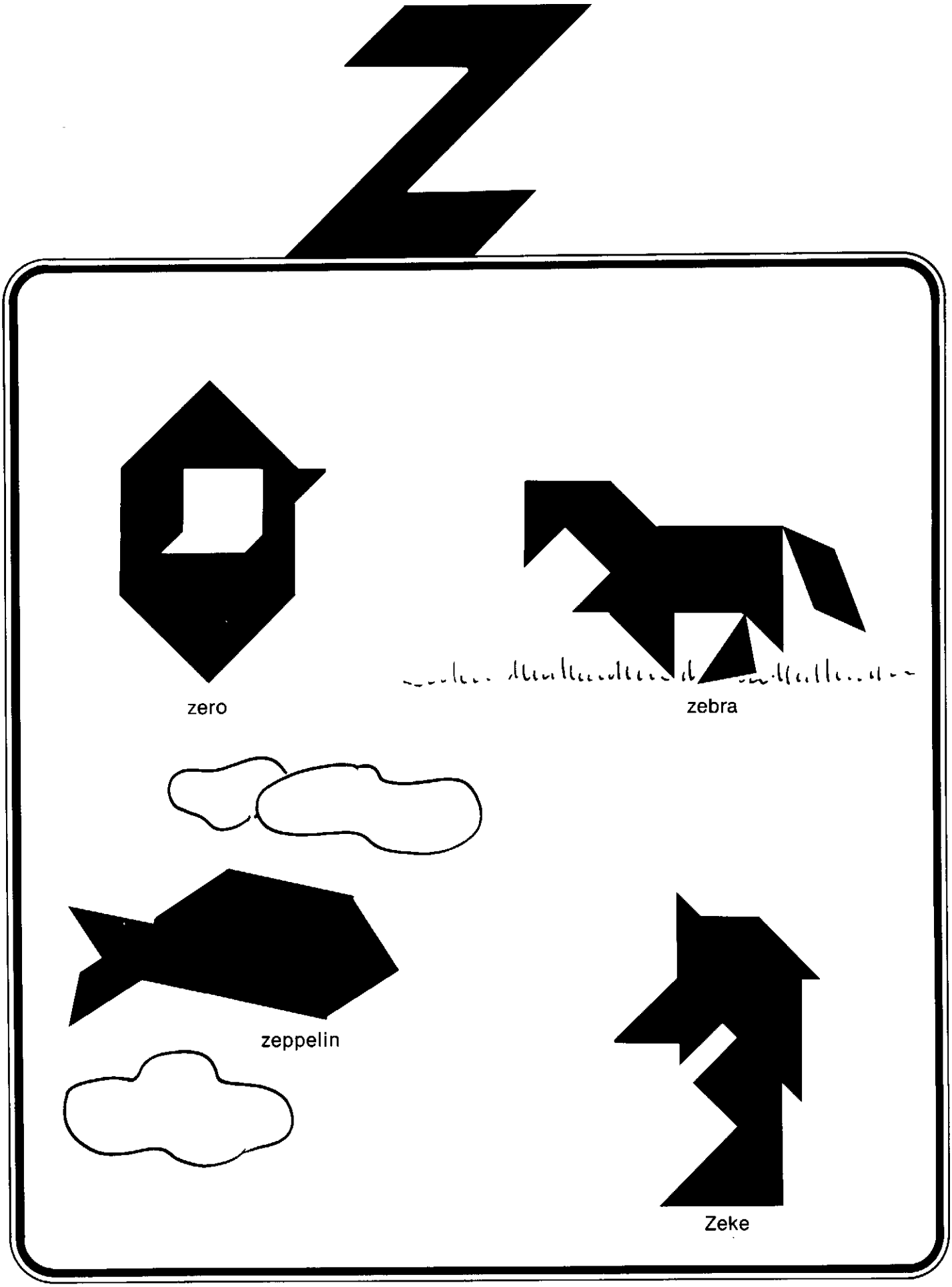
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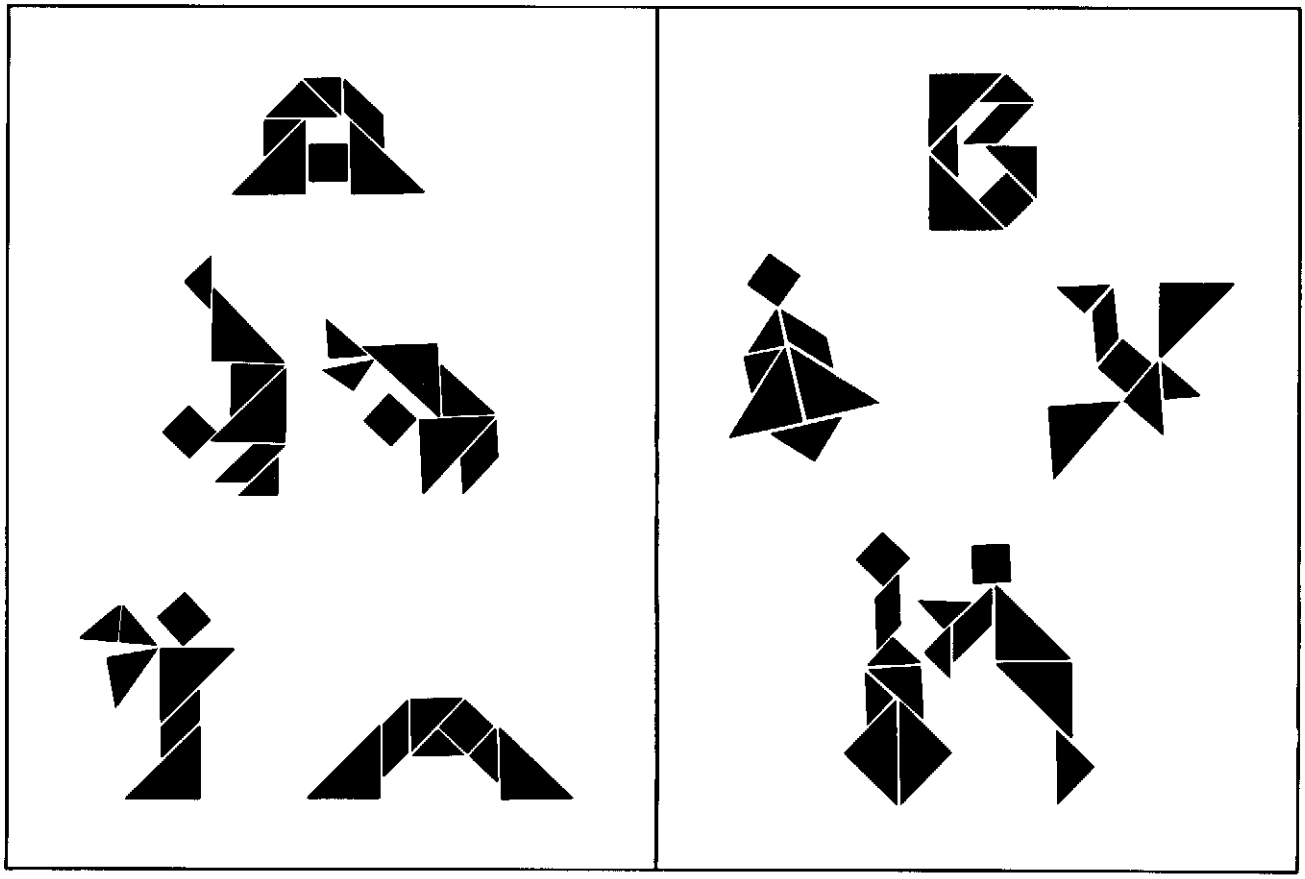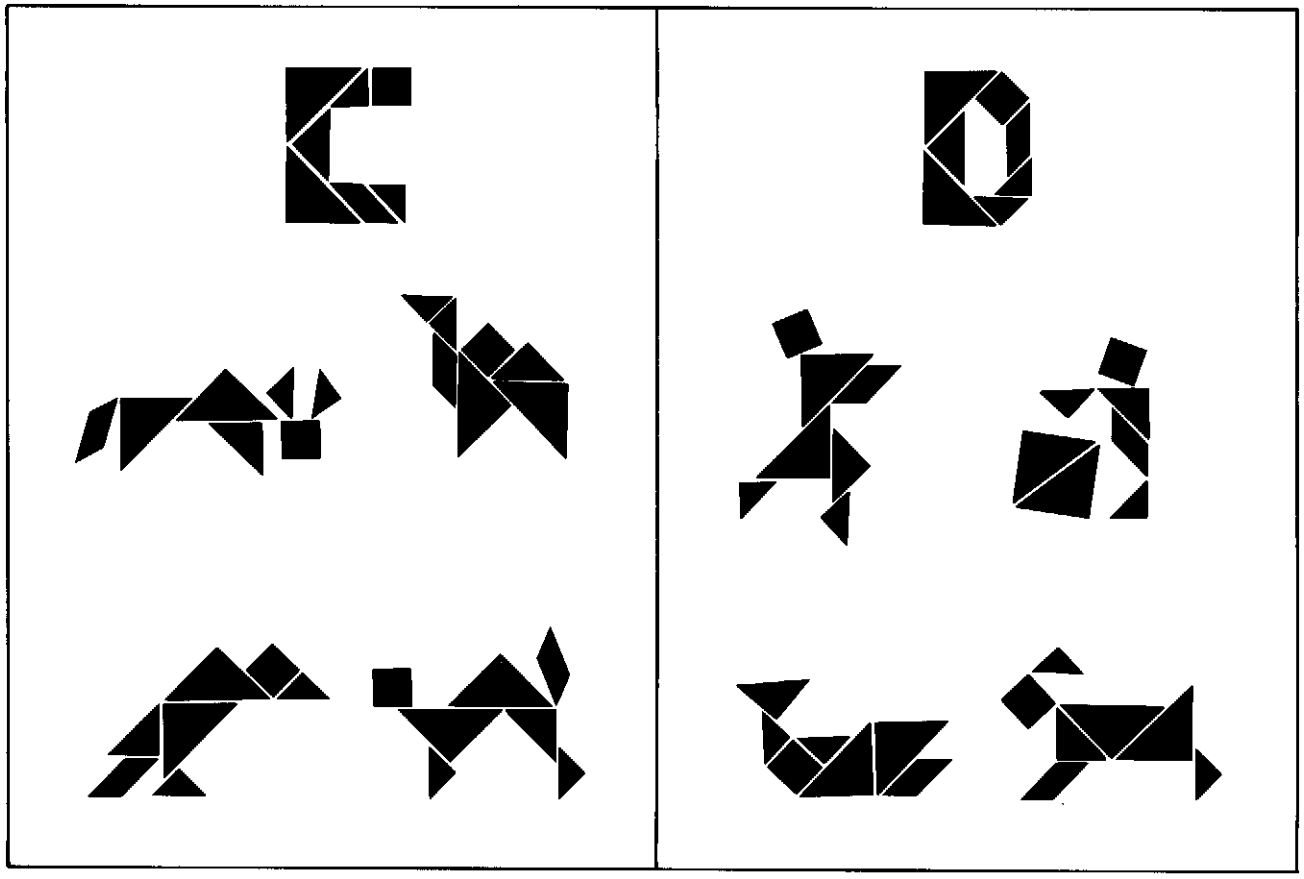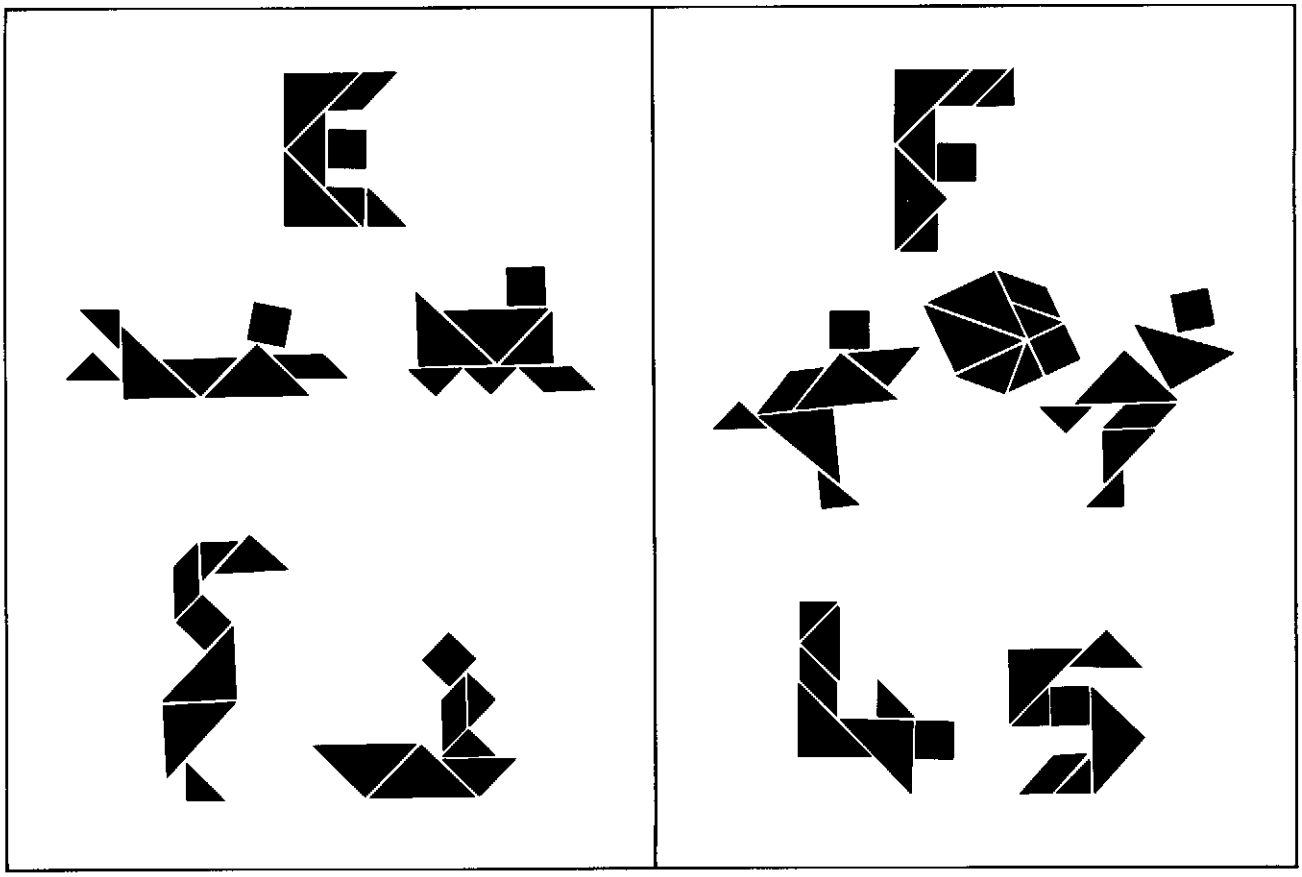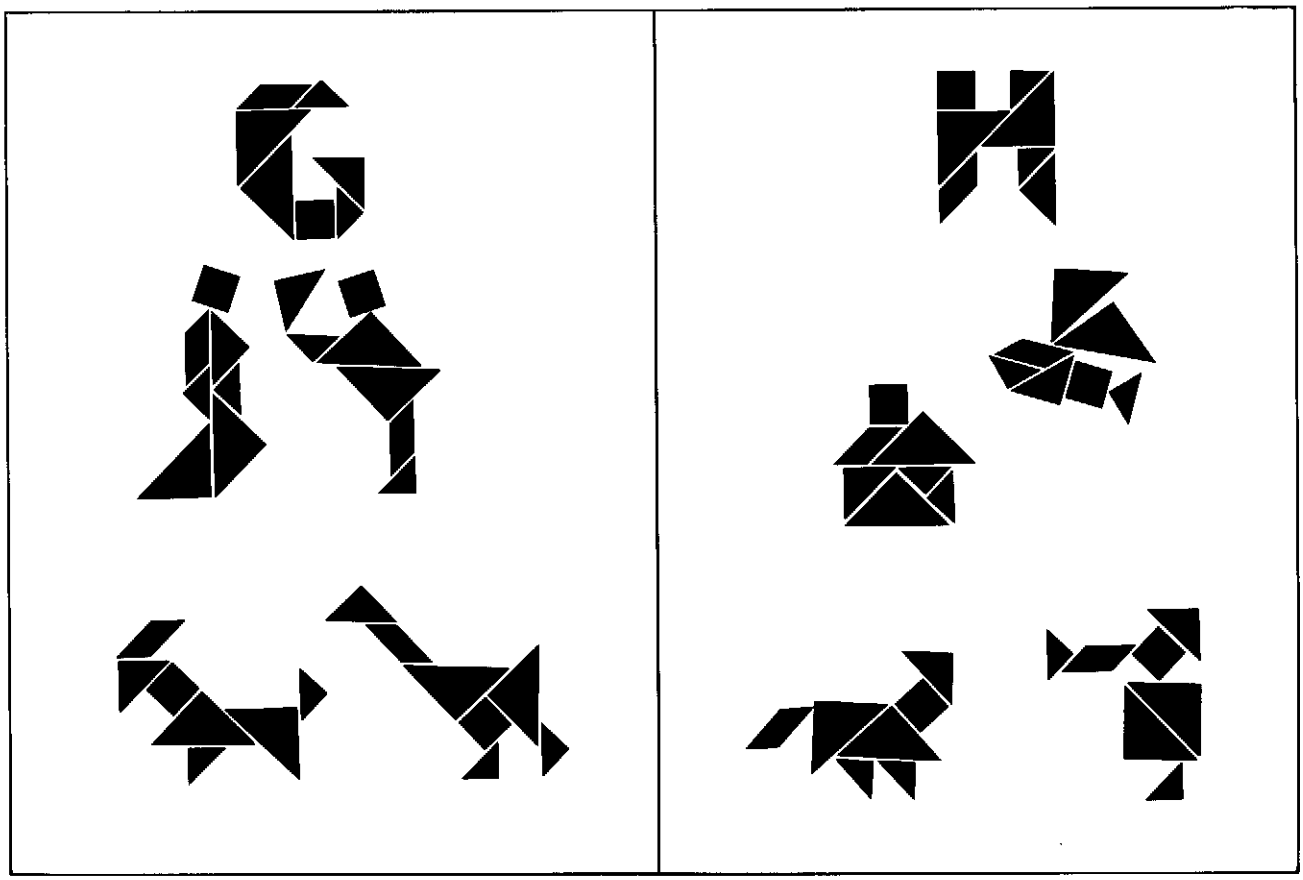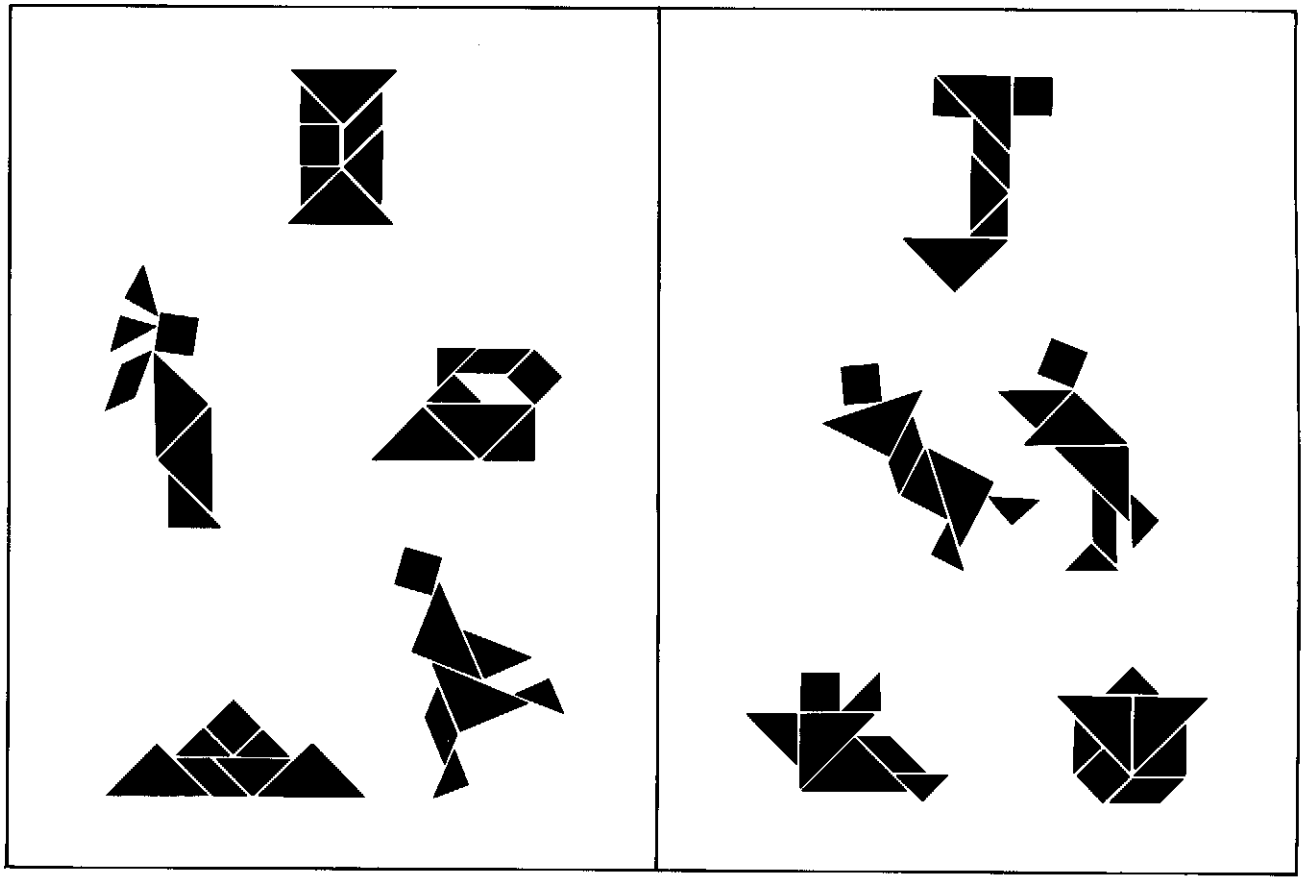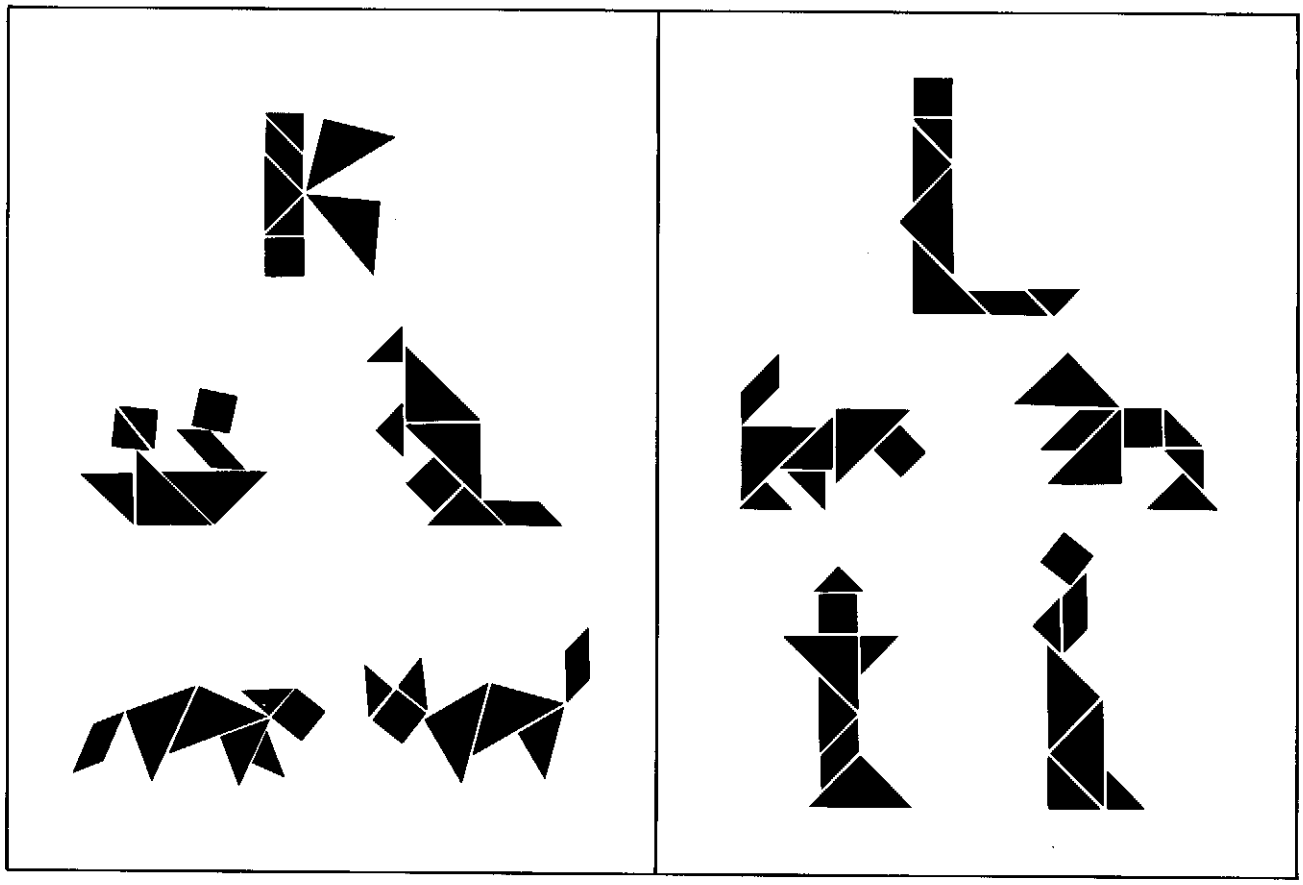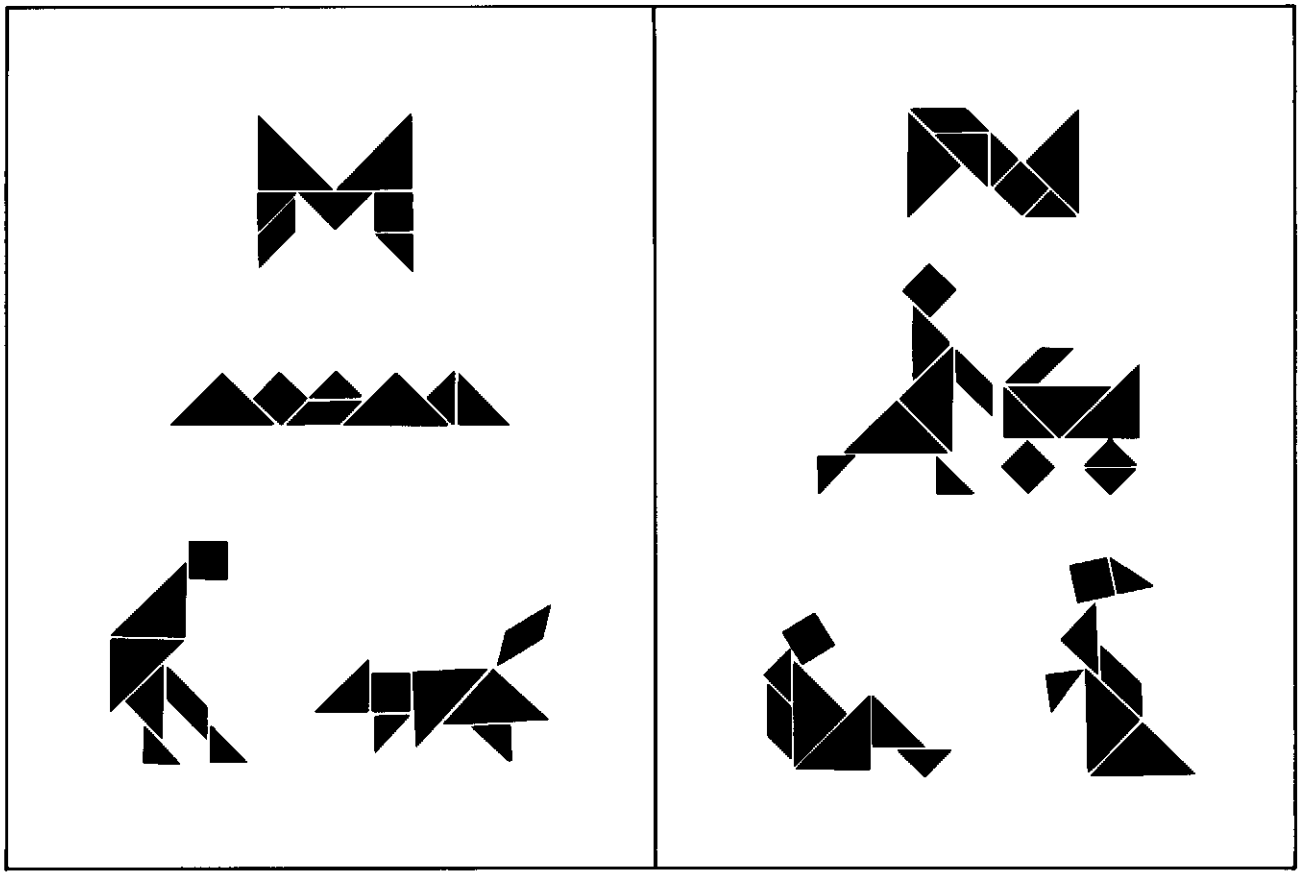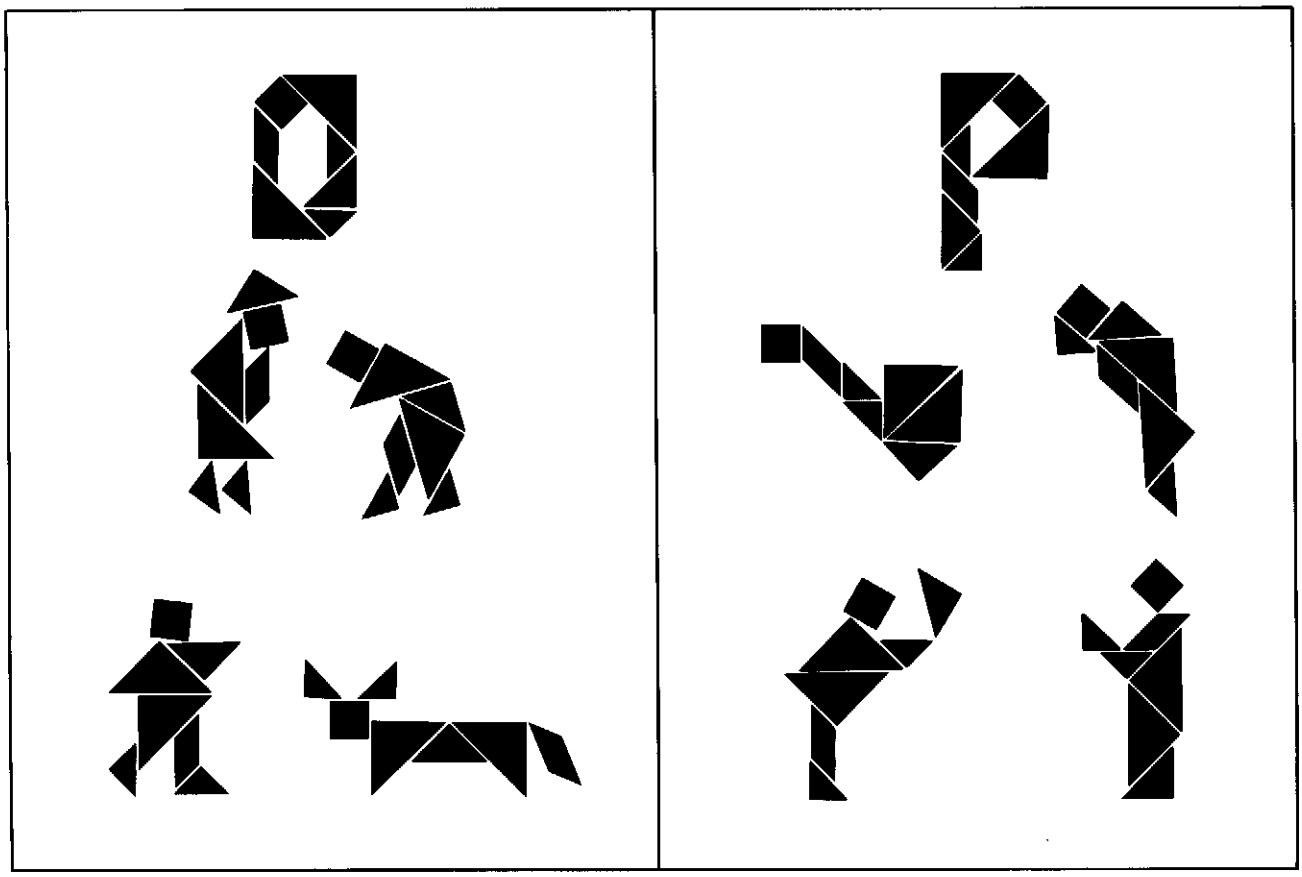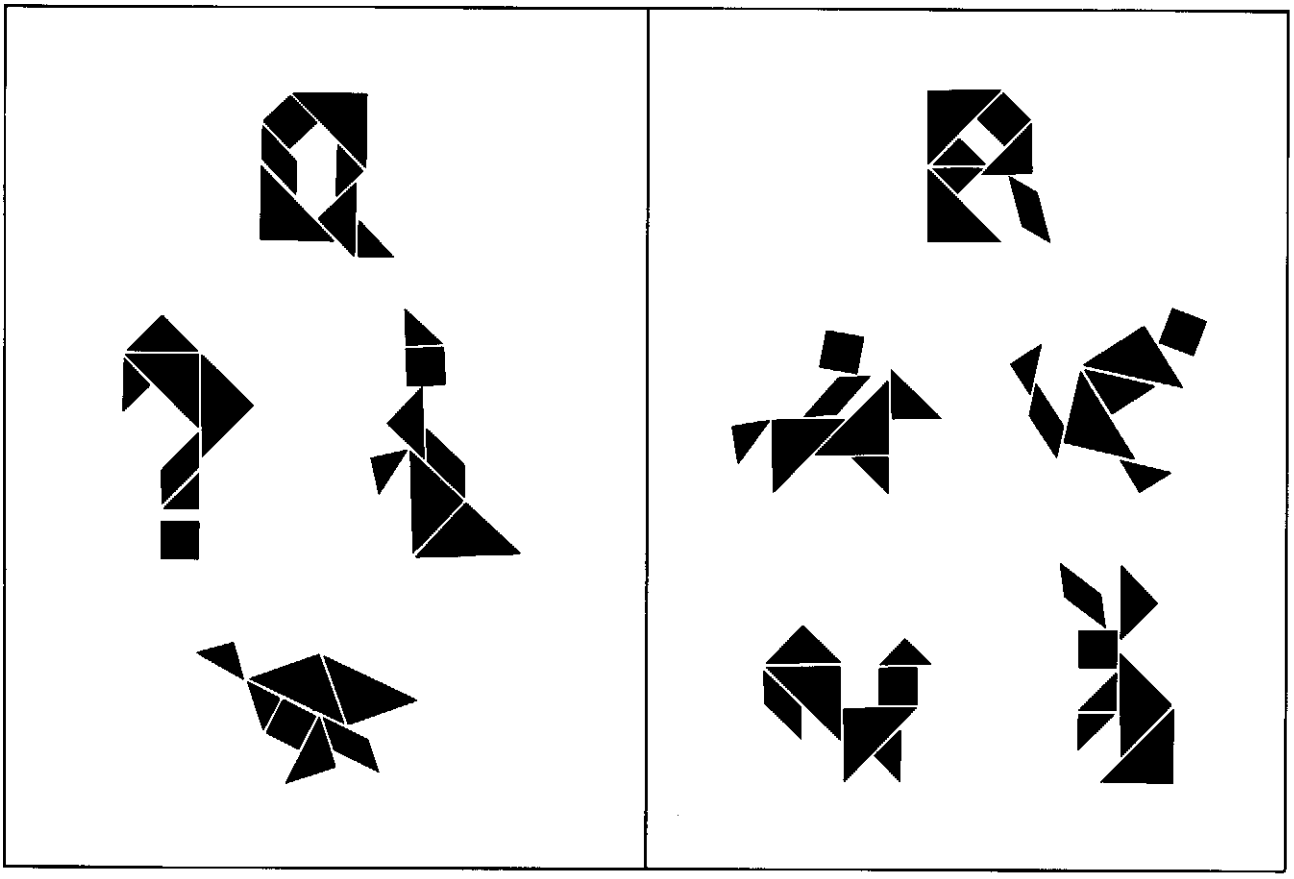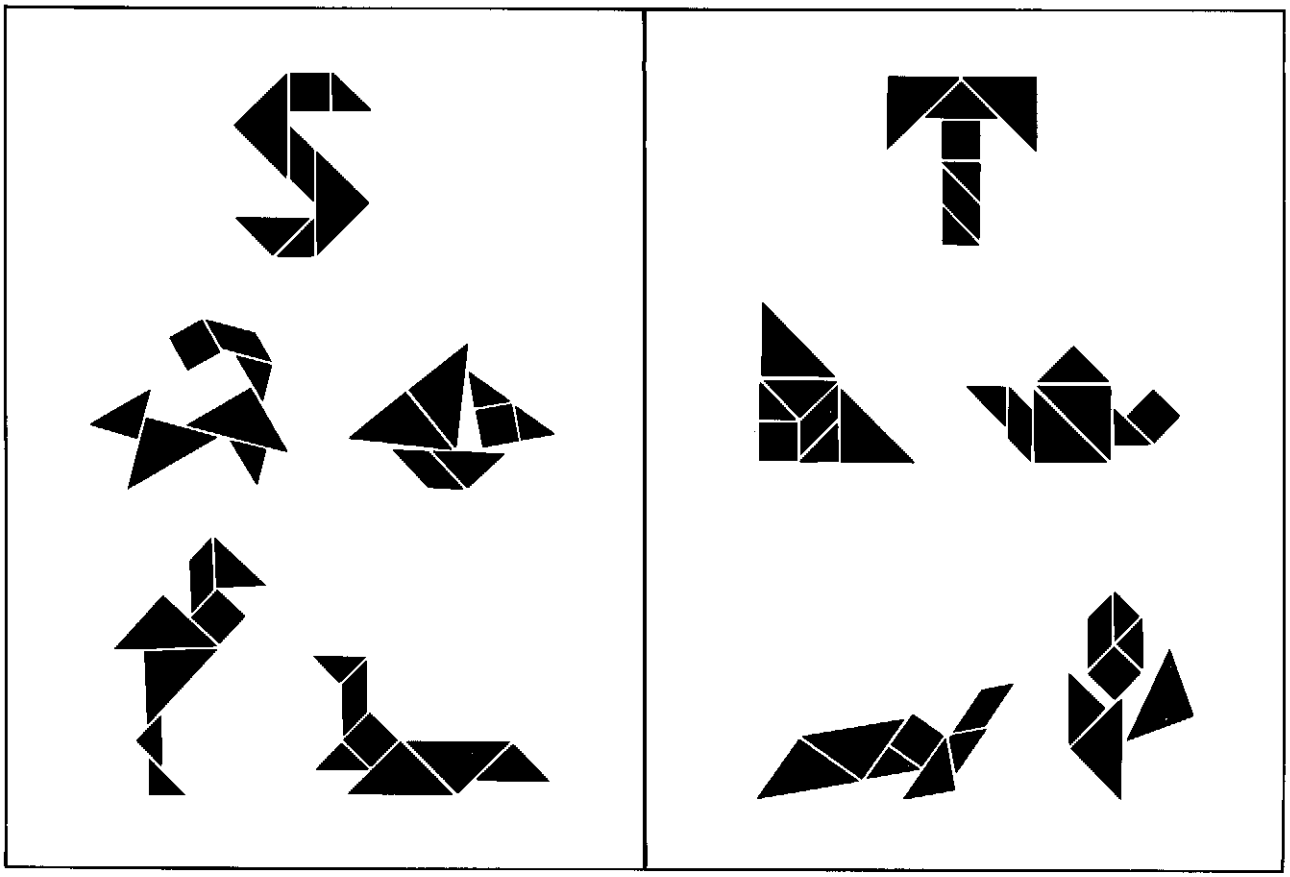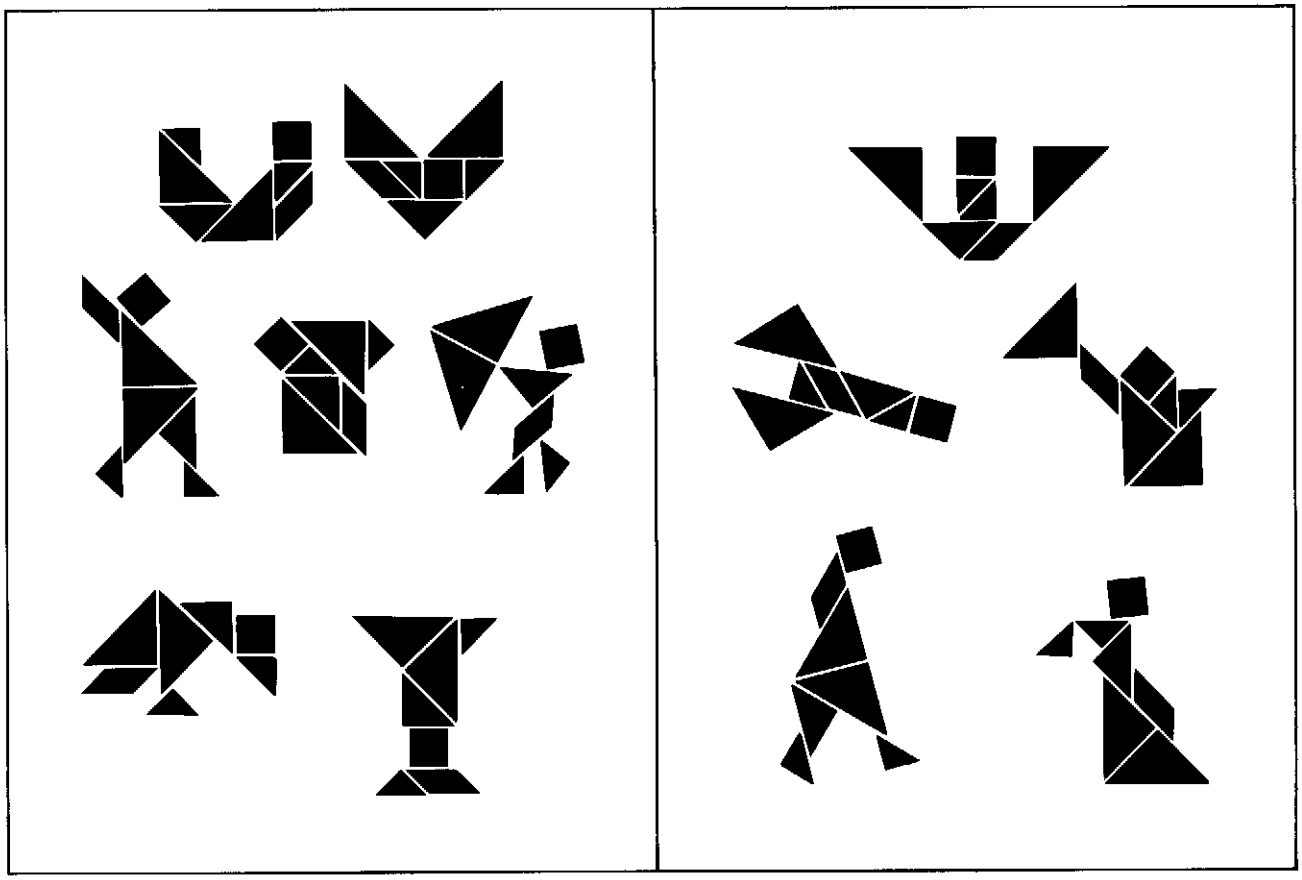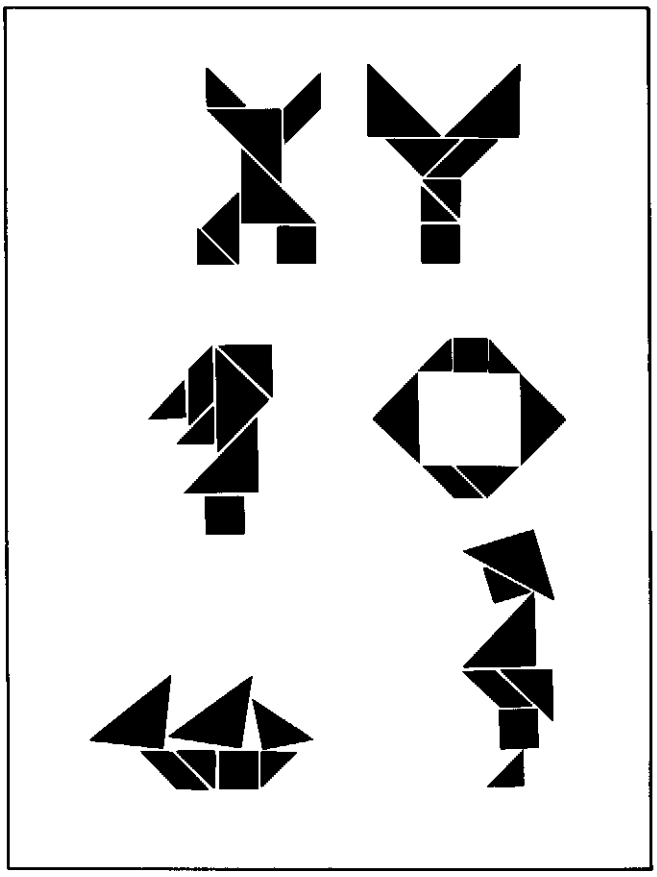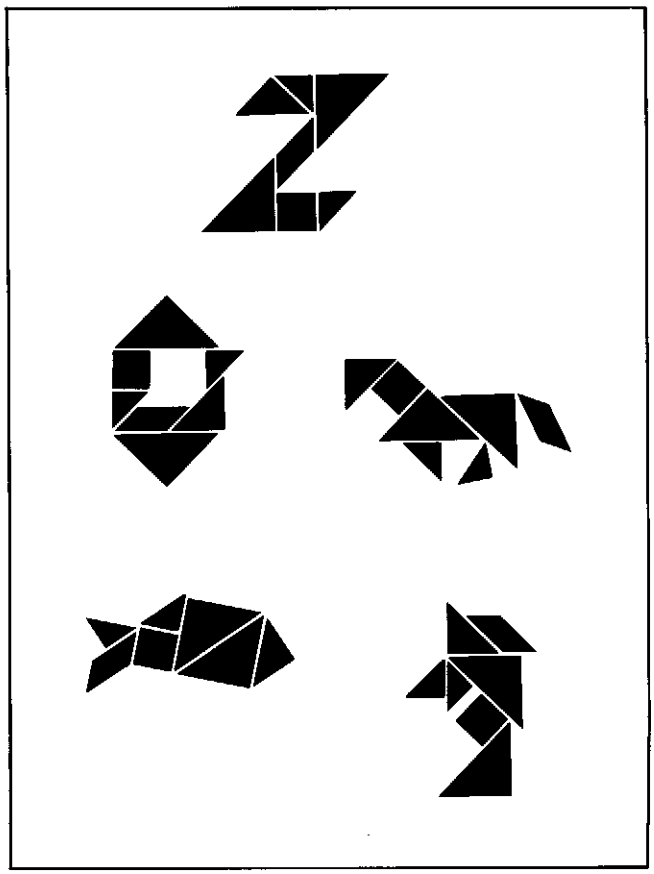
SOLUTIONS